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In What Sense a Fisheries Problem?

Negotiating sustainable growth in
New Zealand fisheries

Eugene Bruce Rees
Abstract

This thesis addresses the question of how seafood enterprises grow in a constrained resource economy and, specifically, examines the performance of New Zealand’s seafood sector since the introduction of the quota management system in 1986. It explores whether the quota management system and individual transferable quota have led to an increase in industry performance and competitiveness. Conventional theoretical arguments for the institution of quota management and transferable quota propose that re-regulation will lead to efficiency, and by implication, profitability gains for the seafood sector. A process-based methodological framework, utilising complementary methodological practices and triangulation using both qualitative and quantitative approaches is employed to examine New Zealand fishing enterprises across a number of scales. Forty subjects were formally interviewed throughout the fishing sector in Nelson, Marlborough, Wellington and Auckland. Informal ongoing conversations with many of the interview subjects, amongst others, in a number of fora (academic and industry conferences, wharves and dockside) also enriched the research. The thesis integrates ideas from political economy in order to begin to answer questions concerning the prospects for sustainability and development. The thesis is about what happens when we consider dimensions that are largely missing in the international literature on fisheries (the firm, region and communities, and territory, resources and markets). This thesis proposes that we must avoid treating quota management systems, individual transferable quota and associated property rights reforms as monolithic. Rather, New Zealand’s quota management system is geographically constituted and co-constructed by stakeholders who play ongoing and changing roles in an emergent dialogue concerning sustainable fisheries, fisheries management and commercial fishing in New Zealand. The thesis finds that volume and value of seafood has increased. However, this increase is largely at the expense of first foreign fishing companies and part-time fishermen, and later small independent fishermen. There has been a rationalisation of fishing effort allied with an increased emphasis in growing more product and more value through aquaculture and value-adding strategies. New geographies of production are emerging and some of these geographies may prove to be unsustainable. Lastly, firms that fish, and particularly quota owners, are actively inserting themselves into debates concerning sustainability, sustainable development and fisheries management in expected ways that have led to unintended and ongoing political and governmental reconfigurations of fisheries in New Zealand.
Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements are funny things. You generally get one shot at them. It’s a chance to reflect on this project which has consumed me for four years or so. When I look back on this project I think of all the people who made it possible in so many ways. Would that I could list all of the people whose love, aroha, support, both financial and emotional, and generosity of spirit got me to this point but there are just too many of you. So those who get the nod thanks and to all the others you’re not forgotten and if you browbeat me enough I’ll probably shout you a beer.

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This thesis is dedicated to my Grandmother, Mary G Muller who loved everyone and they loved her back. Her days were radiant with courage, grace and love.
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List of Acronyms

ACE  Annual Catch Entitlement
ANT  Actor Network Theory
ANZSIC  Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification
CCA  Commodity Chain Analysis
CEO  Chief Executive Officer
CPUE  Catch per Unit Effort
CRA  Quota Management designation for rock lobster
CRAMAC  CRA Management Area Council
CSO  Commercial Stakeholder Organisation
EEZ  Exclusive Economic Zone
FIB  Fishing Industry Board
FTE  Full Time Equivalent
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
HFMC  Hoki Fishery Management Company
ITQ  Individual Transferable Quota
LQ  Location Quotient
MFish  Ministry of Fishing
MSC  Marine Stewardship Council
MSY  Maximum Sustainable Yield
NGO  Non-Governmental Organisation
NIWA  National Institute for Atmosphere and Water
NMIT  Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology
NMSFC  Nelson Marlborough Seafood Cluster
NRLMG  National Rock Lobster Management Group
NTSC  Nelson Tasman Steering Committee
NZRLIC  New Zealand Rock Lobster Industry Council
PMITQ  Provisional Maximum Individual Transferable Quota
PPI  Producer Price Index – Inputs
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<td>PPO</td>
<td>Producer Price Index – Outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QMA</td>
<td>Quota Management Area</td>
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<td>QMS</td>
<td>Quota Management System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SeaFIC</td>
<td>New Zealand Seafood Industry Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>SITO</td>
<td>Seafood Industry Training Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>Small Medium Enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAC</td>
<td>Total Allowable Catch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TACC</td>
<td>Total Allowable Commercial Catch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANC</td>
<td>Total Allowable Non-Commercial Catch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEC</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLA</td>
<td>Territorial Land Authority</td>
</tr>
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<td>TOKM</td>
<td>Te Ohu Kai Moana</td>
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