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Transforming the Fisheries

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TRANSFORMING THE FISHERIES

PATRICK BRESNIHAN

Transforming the Fisheries

Neoliberalism, Nature, and the Commons

University of Nebraska Press
LINCOLN AND LONDON

For Mum and Dad

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Acknowledgments

This book began from a conversation with Hilary Tovey in 2007. It was her initial support and kindness that led me to start a PhD in Trinity College Dublin, and without her ongoing patience and generosity I would never have turned that research into a book. I received similar kindness from Eamonn Slater, who supervised the writing up of the book in Maynooth University in 2014/15. Our lunches in Kilcock and conversations about Rundale and ecology were always much appreciated.

I have received funding for both my doctoral research and the writing of this book. I would like to thank Trinity College, Dublin, for the scholarship I received as an undergraduate and the AXA Foundation for funding my doctorate. To complete the book, I received an Irish Research Council Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship in 2014. I have received additional financial assistance from the Sociology Department in Maynooth. I am also grateful for the patience and care given by the editorial and design team at the University of Nebraska Press—particularly Ann Baker, Chris Steinke, and Bridget Barry.

The months I spent in Castletownbere, County Cork, doing fieldwork were some of the most interesting and rewarding I have known. It would not have been so without the generosity and warmth of the people I met there. Thanks to the fisheries managers, scientists, civil servants, and, of course, fishermen who gave their time and showed me so much. Special thanks to Mary for deciding to move down there with me and for being there through it all.

As is the case with all intellectual work, this book owes many debts to people I have come into contact with over the years. It is almost impossible to pinpoint which conversations and exchanges mattered and how, but it is their cumulative effect that has shaped and still shapes my thinking about the problems addressed in this book. So thanks to Alex Dubilet, Mark Garavan, John Holloway, Emanuele Leonardi, Jawad Moustakbal, Marcela Olivera, Christian Parenti, Ross Perlin, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, Tom Stammers, Eddie Yuen, Alessandro Zagato, and many more. My participation in the Authority Research Network has also given me all sorts of intellectual nourishment over the past five years as well as new friendships.

Something I have always appreciated is the time and generosity given to me by teachers and individuals whose work I value. This goes all the way back to my history teacher in school, who always assumed his students were intelligent and always had time to talk. More recently, two people that stand out in a similar respect are Dimitris Papadopoulos and Peter Linebaugh. Apart from influencing my work through their writing, they have always been more than generous as people and teachers.

Closer to home, my sister, Sive, was one of the first people to read and comment on drafts of my thesis and has always given her little brother insights and support. Similarly, Naomi Millner, whose energy and work constantly inspires, has shared so many ideas with me about history, nature, and the commons. Going back to the very beginning of my PhD, my main collaborator and friend has always been Mick Byrne—he still is and I feel very lucky for that. Without a doubt, though, the person who has given the most support in the writing of this book has been Rachel O'Dwyer, who provided endless conversations, read drafts, and was generally so positive and patient. She continues to amaze through her modesty and intelligence.

Finally, I want to thank the Catholic Library on Merrion Square and the National Library on Kildare Street where I did much of my writing for the PhD and the book—I hope they never close.

TRANSFORMING THE FISHERIES

Introduction

Ecological Crises and Beyond

The Ghost of Malthus

In 1998 ecologist Garrett Hardin wrote a sympathetic reappraisal of Thomas Malthus's text *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, published two hundred years earlier (1998). He relates a parable that Malthus added to the second edition. In the parable, a man comes to the table of "nature's mighty feast" and asks if he can have a seat. Some of the guests have sympathy for him and make room. Immediately, other "intruders" appear demanding that they also be admitted to the feast. Malthus concludes, "The order and harmony of the feast is disturbed, the plenty that before reigned is changed into scarcity; and the happiness of the guests is destroyed by the spectacle of misery and dependence in every part of the hall, and by the clamorous importunity of those, who are justly enraged at not finding the provision which they had been taught to expect" (Malthus 1803, 531; Hardin 1998, 181). The guests thus learn the lesson that the "great mistress of the feast" already knew: they must refuse any newcomers when the table is already full.

Although this anecdote was taken out from subsequent editions, it remains a powerful metaphor for both supporters and critics of Malthusian theories of overpopulation and the "naturalization" of scarcity (Dale 2012; Mehta 2010). Thirty years before he invoked Malthus's story, Hardin had already given it new life through his own parable, "The Tragedy of the Commons." Published in 1968, Hardin's essay was only one of many stark warnings about impending social and environmental catastrophe if rapid population growth

continued to put pressure on limited resources. In the same year, Paul Ehrlich's book *The Population Bomb* opened with an alarmist statement about the need to accelerate the global death rate if the problems of hunger and famine were to be averted (Ehrlich 1968). These deliberately polemical accounts found support in scientific data and predictions based on current models of development and resource availability. In 1972 the newly formed Club of Rome published their well-known report *The Limits of Growth*, and five years later a research group based in MIT released the *Global 2000 Report to the President* (Pirages and Cousins 2005). These reports showed that demands on soil, forests, fisheries, and water supplies would reach critical levels by the turn of the century. The problem was growing demand on a finite planet. Instead of just defining a crisis in production or growth rates, these reports identified a wholesale crisis in the sphere of biophysical reproduction (Cooper 2008). Pointing to the potentially catastrophic consequences of unregulated growth, writers like Hardin did not then find it hard to recall and reestablish Malthus's theories of overpopulation. The basic "law" he propounded was that the exponential growth of the human population would produce demands that would outstrip available resources. Although Malthus may have provided some unsavory solutions to this problem, the validity of his arguments remained. Failure to acknowledge this law of nature would result in far worse outcomes: "injustice is preferable to total ruin," as Hardin succinctly put it (1968, 1247).

Today, multiple and mounting ecological crises appear, if anything, to be worse than the predictions of forty years ago. Scientific evidence documents the sixth mass extinction as well as disruptions to the hydrological cycle, the soil cycle, and, perhaps most importantly of all, the carbon cycle, otherwise known as anthropogenic climate change (Kolbert 2014). The media speculates and increasingly reports on "perfect storms" of food shortages, water scarcity, and insufficient energy resources with devastating social, economic, and geopolitical consequences (Parenti 2011). Mirroring these accounts, and sometimes indistinguishable from them, are the seemingly endless stream of dystopian films and books that

populate our cultural imaginary (Lilley et al. 2012). The emphasis on limits, shortages, thresholds, and overcapacity is understandable, but it also reveals a recurring Malthusian trope about the narrowing of future possibilities in the face of "natural" limits and the urgent need to reorganize society in response to these limits (Mehta 2010). As historian Iain Boal writes, "Scratch an environmentalist and you'll probably find a Malthusian" (Boal 2006).

Perhaps the clearest sign of the lingering ghost of Malthus is in the growing popularity of the term *anthropocene.* First coined in the 1980s by ecologist Eugene Stoermer, the term has spread far beyond the concerns of the earth and atmospheric sciences. It refers to a new geological period following the Holocene when humanity, "anthropos," has played a decisive and largely destructive role in geological and environmental transformations. While there is disagreement over when "we" began having such an impact on the lithosphere (see Moore 2014), the most popular periodization dates the Anthropocene from sometime around 1800, the moment coal became the principal energy source of a carbonized human civilization (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000; *Economist* 2013). The term "anthropocene" appears to both respond to and explain the unprecedented and multiple ecological crises we are currently experiencing. It is compelling because it finally appears to take seriously what we have failed to recognize for so long: we, "humanity," are responsible for the over-exploitation and degradation of "nature," and something urgent must be done to rebalance our relationship with it. With this, the current storm of ecological crises are neatly translated into a conflict between unregulated human activity and limited biophysical nature. Establishing this as the point of consensus opens a space for policy makers, scientists, companies, and citizens to work together to rebalance a system that has fallen out of sync.[1] A prime example of this transition from large-scale depletion of resources to consensus-based environmental management is the crisis of overfishing in the Irish and European fisheries, the focus of this book.

In 1844 Thomas Huxley, a leading Victorian scientist, presented a paper to the "Great International Fishery Exhibition" in London.

He claimed that "the cod fishery, the herring fishery, the pilchard fishery, the mackerel fishery, and probably all the great sea-fisheries are inexhaustible; that is to say that nothing we do seriously affects the number of fish" (quoted in Graham 1943, 111).[2] After centuries of exploitation, greatly intensified since the 1970s, the extractive demands of the fishing industry have caught up with the reproductive capacities of most commercially targeted fish stocks (Food and Agricultural Organization 2010; Rogers 1995). The project of capitalist modernity has finally conquered the deep-sea fisheries once thought to be inexhaustible (Campling et al. 2012; Clausen and Clark 2005). This conquest encapsulates a familiar history of capitalist development that was far from "natural" or linear. The modernization of fishing fleets, the development of onshore landing, processing, and distribution infrastructure, and the opening up of new global markets required political and economic investments that excluded other modes of marine production, knowledge, and culture.[3] Now, in place of Thomas Huxley's nineteenth-century optimism, we are more likely to encounter the catastrophist claims of someone like Charles Glover, an environmental campaigner whose book *The End of the Line* was turned into a popular documentary in 2007. Released in cinemas as part of a wider media campaign to inform the public about overfishing, the film, as the title suggests, is part of a new genre of eco-catastrophe. Combining footage of industrial-scale fishing with clips of international scientists predicting the future collapse of global fish stocks, its message is unambiguously stark: if the level of fishing does not reduce dramatically, the oceans will be emptied.

The crisis of overfishing is particularly severe in the European fisheries. In 2008 the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) concluded that 35 of 41 commercial fish stocks in European waters were overfished, compared to 25 percent of fish stocks worldwide (Commission for Environmental Cooperation 2008b). Another report estimated that the European fishing industry exceeded sustainable fishing levels by 40 percent (Commission for Environmental Cooperation 2008a). As I was told countless times during my research, the problem stemmed from the fact that "too

many fishermen were chasing too few fish." The European Commission has described this as a "vicious cycle" as fishermen are pressured into fishing more intensively in ever more distant fishing grounds to repay debts and compete with fishermen in other parts of the world.

As with other environmental issues, the crisis of overfishing is a growing concern not only for policymakers but also for environmental campaigners, nongovernmental organizations, and the public.[4] Growing awareness among scientific, fishing, and environmental communities about declining fish stocks and the unsustainability of the fishing industry have now pushed questions of conservation and sustainability into the center of debates over the future management of the Irish and European fisheries.

At "Back to the Future," a conference held in Dublin with environmental NGOs in June 2011, the Irish Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney, said that fisheries management could not return to the past, to a time when many people made a living from the sea, when there were healthy fish stocks and abundant biodiversity. There was "no choice but to become a modern fishery adapted to global realities" (Coveney 2011). Organized as part of a lobbying campaign for the upcoming reform of the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the premise of the meeting was to imagine a way beyond the current crisis, "restoring" the fisheries and fishing communities to a sustainable path. Minister Coveney made it clear that this would require two strategies: first, taking "courageous decisions" to limit fishing effort; and second, developing new economic opportunities around "green" growth and sustainability. Minister Coveney pinpoints what is required to move beyond the crisis of overfishing: a transformation in the mode of production, a shift away from the unsustainable extraction of limited marine resources to a mode of production based on "green" values. European fishing policy reflects this ambition with member states setting themselves the target of reducing fishing mortality by 50 percent in some fisheries by 2020. The scale of this task is vast. As the European Commission makes clear, achieving this will require "*radical changes to the way Europe's fisheries are*

managed—changes which will reverse economic and institutional incentives to overfishing and replace them with a system which positively encourages good stewardship of our oceans and seas by all those who live from them" (Commission for Environmental Cooperation 2008a, 7; emphasis added).

To those critical of attempts to "green" capitalism, this aspiration toward a sustainable fishing industry might appear naïve at best and meaningless rhetoric at worst. In familiar Malthusian terms the phenomenon of overfishing is "naturalized," becoming the fact around which fisheries managers, policy makers, and scientists can come together to negotiate and work out pragmatic and measurable solutions. The only questions posed in this account are how to ensure the continued biological reproduction of fish stocks ("Nature") and how to provide new opportunities for the creation of profits ("Capitalism") (Kenis and Lievens 2014).[5] This obscures one of the critical insights of Marxist analysis and, more recently, political ecology (Blaikie 1985; Moore 2003; Peet and Watts 1996): scarcity or the degradation of ecosystems is not "natural" but the result of specific, uneven, and contestable processes of *social* production. In neglecting this we are prevented from asking "the politically sensitive, but vital, question as to what kind of socio-environmental arrangements do we wish to produce, how can this be achieved, and what sort of natures do we wish to inhabit" (Swyngedouw 2007, 23).

But what does this critique tell us about how these dominant, bioeconomic narratives are reshaping the interactions between society and nature? What do Coveney's seemingly benign words mean when translated into new scientific, economic, and regulatory practices in fisheries management today? Is it just "business as usual," or are these cumulative efforts to manage ecological crises such as overfishing giving rise to *new* ways of knowing, valuing, and producing nature? These are important questions for understanding what is at stake in contemporary environmental governance: as "nature" transforms from being a raw material for extraction to something that must be cared for and valued within a "green"

economy, certain ways of knowing and doing will be counted as "productive" and "environmental" and others will not. At its heart then, this process is about the redrawing of boundaries, the generation of novel forms of inclusion and exclusion. This book examines these transformations and the different ways they are being justified and implemented.

In this sense the book also tries to take Malthus seriously. "Malthusianism" has meant different things at different times, but a common understanding is that Malthus was politically and morally conservative, advocated all manner of forced population control, and favored natural checks on the poor such as famine and disease (see Mayhew 2014; Ross 1998). He is commonly cast, and thus dismissed, as an ideological advocate of the elites, a high priest of capitalist enclosure (Dale 2012). There is a general (and justifiable) tendency to focus on the negative social consequences of his thinking and the policies he inspires: "Somebody, somewhere, is redundant, and there is not enough to go round," as David Harvey rightly concludes (Harvey 1974, 273). However, while his ideas and writings undoubtedly help to justify social inequality, defining him solely as an apologist for particular interests misses the real force of his analysis and thus limits our capacity to effectively move beyond it. A different reading situates Malthus more broadly within the liberal current of thought that emerged during the eighteenth century in Britain and elsewhere (Mayhew 2014; Winch 2013). This historical framing also reminds us that Malthus and others were responding to particular social and material conditions: at the end of the eighteenth century, there were real and urgent problems of food scarcity and associated social and political upheavals. Malthus was part of a generation of thinkers that began to problematize such crises in a radically different way. I trace how the force of this liberal reasoning still operates today through the management of ecological crises such as overfishing. In the following section, I will briefly outline how my book contributes theoretically to the study of ecological crisis and transformation and where it sits within existing debates on neoliberalism and nature.

Neoliberalism and the New Enclosures

Over the last thirty years different biophysical resources in more and more parts of the world have been subjected to processes of commodification and privatization (Castree 2008a, 2008b). Continued and expanding commodity production has fed demand for raw materials, including land, water, and energy. This expansion has given rise to "classical" forms of enclosure, such as widespread land grabs in the Global South (Heynen et al. 2007; McMichael 2011). However, new forms of environmental management have also turned to the market to achieve its goals: mounting environmental problems at regional and global scales, the inability of existing state institutions to deal with them, and new commercial opportunities arising from the "green" economy have all promoted the embrace of market-based instruments for managing environmental problems such as overexploited resources, pollution, or habitat destruction (Heynen and Robbins 2005; Mansfield 2004; McCarthy and Prudham 2004). In water resource management, not only has the private sector become more involved in water services but the extension of the user-pays principle reflects the normalization of economic values when it comes to resource allocation (Bakker 2003, 2005; Budds 2004; Kaika 2003; Smith 2004); managers of global fisheries have introduced individual transferable quotas (ITQs) that effectively facilitate new markets in fish quotas (Mansfield 2007a, 2007b; St. Martin 2000, 2007); there are ongoing efforts to address the problems of climate change through carbon markets (Bond 2012; Lohmann 2009; Leonardi 2012); and Natural Capital accounting and Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) provide a seemingly limitless field for commercial opportunities in the areas of biodiversity conservation (Büscher et al. 2012; Sullivan 2013). This general and multifaceted process of marketization in the area of environmental governance has led some scholars to describe it as the "neoliberalization of nature" (Heynen et al. 2007).

Unsurprisingly, the dominant critical response to the resurfacing of the market as a response to ecological crises has come from the field of Marxist political economy. In many ways, it echoes Marx's

original critique of liberal economics and the faith in laissez-faire policy-making. For Marx, the "free market" was anything but free when it forced people to sell their labor and relied on the state to introduce and uphold the rule of private property. Marx described the violent process of expropriation that separated the mass of the population from necessary and direct access to the means of social reproduction (land, rivers, forests) as "primitive accumulation" (Marx [1867] 1990). This separation took place during the seventeenth and eighteenth century in Europe, forcing the population from the country into the cities, where they had to sell their labor in return for wages. For Marx, liberal economists only provided a one-sided, ahistorical account of this process, elevating the capitalist mode of production from a historically specific organization of labor and nature into a universal one. This provided the ideological defense of capitalist interests and the justification for new rounds of accumulation in response to periodic crises: the problem of scarce resources could always be displaced and overcome through the enclosure and commodification of new frontiers (Moore 2014a, 2014b).[6]

Since the telling intervention of the Midnight Notes Collective, scholars and activists have recognized that this dynamic relationship between crisis and capitalist expansion is at the heart of contemporary forms of neoliberal globalization (De Angelis 2007; Jeffrey et al. 2012; Midnight Notes 1990). This updates orthodox Marxist analysis, which understands primitive accumulation as a *particular* phase in the historical emergence of capitalism. The result is a growing literature on new forms of primitive accumulation or "accumulation by dispossession" that have arisen in response to the crisis of environmental limits (Bond 2012; De Angelis 2001; Harvey 1996).

Although this historically informed analysis of the relationship between capitalist crises and socio-ecological crisis is critically important, it often assumes that neoliberal policies—or policies that open up potentially new markets—are the result of elite, capitalist interests, rather than the result of a particular form of economic reasoning that is intimately tied up with, but irreducible to, capitalist expansion. This dismissal of neoliberal reasoning as an important

site of inquiry in itself is indicated by a tendency to focus on the negative social and environmental effects of neoliberal policies rather than the logic and practice that enable neoliberalism to have such a hold over our lives (Dardot and Laval 2013; Lemke 2002, 2011a). Political economy approaches thus appear to privilege the expansionist logic of capitalism at the expense of examining the regulatory, institutional, and discursive processes that enable this growth to happen. The effect of this analysis can appear contradictory: it lends "neoliberalism" considerable coherence and power but also takes it largely for granted. Although neoliberal policies *are* creatively responding to crises of capitalist production, they are doing so in ways that are constitutive of new "natures" that go beyond a narrow concern for economic productivity, labor, and profits. In other words, it is important to take seriously what neoliberalism in the realm of knowledge-production and subject-formation is doing rather than assuming that policy makers, scientists, and even environmentalists are naively presenting (again) a one-sided account of ecological problems that effectively naturalize and universalize capitalist relations of production.

Partly in response to this idealization of neoliberalism, a body of work has emerged over the past ten years that seeks to empirically analyze processes of neoliberalization within particular geographic and institutional contexts (Castree 2008a, 2008b; Chazkel and Serlin 2010; Heynen and Robbins 2005). Although still situated within the theoretical tradition of Marxist political economy (and political ecology), this work tends to emphasize the diverse implementation of neoliberal rationalities in practice. Importantly, these scholars make clear that neoliberalism is not uniform or pure but adapts to the many different institutional settings and sociomaterial realities where it is deployed (Bakker 2010; Fine 2009). These efforts to describe and examine "actually existing neoliberalism" (Brenner and Theodore 2002) emerge in response to the gap between the ideological claims and representations of neoliberalism and the complex, messy, even contradictory ways it materializes in the world. The emphasis of this work is thus on examining the *process* and *practice* of neoliberalism; rather than defining neo-

liberalism as a coherent set of institutions or a program to shape reality, these scholars argue that neoliberalism is better understood as a hybrid process from the beginning (Peck 2004). This approach reveals the heterogeneity of neoliberalism, the different institutional contexts in which it takes place, and the involvement of both state and nonstate actors in shaping its development (Larner 2000, 2003; Mansfield 2004, 2006, 2007b). As Noel Castree has argued, however, empirically rich case studies that challenge the supposed purity of neoliberalism can also undermine our capacity to grasp the force of neoliberalism as the governing rationality of contemporary life, particularly as it relates to managing ecological crises.[7]

Largely missing in accounts of the "neoliberalization of nature," Michel Foucault's historically rooted analysis of liberal and neoliberal thought can help respond to this apparent impasse between ideologically "strong" and empirically "weak" conceptualizations of neoliberalism.[8] His understanding of liberalism cannot, however, be separated from the analysis of biopower developed in his later work. In the last of his 1976 lectures at the College de France and in his book *The History of Sexuality,* Foucault outlined how until the end of the eighteenth century, sovereign power was characterized by a power of "deduction": the legal deprivation of goods, products, services, and, in extreme cases, life itself from political subjects. In contrast, biopower is characterized by a power of "production" that seeks to administer, develop, and foster life, "a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them" (Foucault 1998, 136).[9] With this shift, nature is no longer understood to be "external, holy and unchangeable" but rather consists of "natural processes of life" that are subject to measurement and regulation (Lemke 2010). The task of government was to better understand these underlying processes in order to shape and channel them toward certain "common" goals, such as increased economic output. This new relationship between knowledge and power gave rise to a new liberal "art of government" or governmentality, as Foucault calls it, that is not concerned with "imposing law

on men but of disposing of things: that is of employing tactics rather than laws, or even of using laws themselves as tactics—to arrange things in such a way that, through a certain number of means, such-and-such ends may be achieved" (Foucault 1991, 95). These "tactics" do not derive from a preexisting authority but are an ongoing response to particular social and environmental phenomena. It is precisely this pragmatism, this situated-ness, this refusal to engage with "political" or "ethical" questions that makes liberal forms of government so effective at managing the population. As Thomas Lemke writes, the "perspective of governmentality makes possible the development of a dynamic form of analysis that does not limit itself to stating the 'retreat of politics' or the 'domination of the market' but deciphers *the so-called 'end of politics' itself as a political programme*" (Lemke 2000, 10; emphasis added).

It is no coincidence that Foucault traces the emergence of bio-power, a power over life itself, to the second half of the eighteenth century and the culmination of so-called primitive accumulation, which Marx identified as being so central to the historical transition toward capitalism. Although Foucault does not refer explicitly to the enclosures and "improvements" unfolding across both Britain and France at this time, his analysis can and should be read as an important complement to Marxist analysis. The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed "improvements" in land-use, husbandry, and agricultural production that went hand in hand with the enclosure of the open-field system and the diverse commons of land, forest, and river (Barrell 2010; Linebaugh 2008, 2011; Mayhew 2014; Neeson 1996; Thompson 1993).[10] Important scholarly work by Carolyn Merchant, Silvia Federici, and Jason Moore has shown the intimate connections between the historic emergence of capitalism and the disciplining and control of the sphere of "reproduction"—those situated forms of knowledge, practice, and value that were necessary for the direct and ongoing reproduction of collectives of human and nonhuman life (Federici 2001, 2004, 2012; Merchant 1980; Moore 2014a, 2014b). These accounts reveal how the history of enclosures and "improvements" is not just a history of material dispossession. It is also a history of the exclu-

sion of certain ways of knowing and relating to the land, forests, rivers, and animals.[11] Foucault's work allows us to connect the violent appropriation that characterized primitive accumulation with the emergence of a more general, productive regime of knowledge-power (Goldstein 2013). It is important to make this connection today as new modes of capitalist accumulation develop alongside new ways of knowing and organizing ecological and life processes (Barca 2007; Federici 2004; Merchant 1980; Moore 2003; Nealon 2008; Sullivan 2013). As Foucault writes,

> Biopower was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes. . . . . The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, *the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit, were made possible in part by the exercise of biopower in its many forms and modes of application.* (Foucault 1998, 140–41; emphasis added)

Although governmentality studies tend to focus on the micro-practices of the state, it is important to recognize that underlying ideas and assumptions about human and nonhuman nature lie at the heart of liberal modes of government. What distinguishes these forms of world-making, however, is that normative ideas are not exactly imposed on reality as prescriptive norms but are more accurately verified through the activity of governing itself, through the gradual composition of a reality that is rendered amenable to calculation and regulation. Throughout my interviews with fisheries scientists, fisheries managers, and policy makers, I encountered a consistent commitment to making policies work "on the ground." Their analysis and recommendations emerged through prolonged engagement with the socioeconomic and ecological dimensions of the fisheries they were working with. This iterative and highly reflexive process reflected a commitment to identifying and including *more* aspects of reality in order to achieve the "common" (and measurable) goals of economic and environmental sustainabil-

ity. The success or failure of a particular policy was judged not in terms of its "fairness" (or according to some other normative criteria) but solely according to its measurable effects vis-à-vis these already defined goals. There was never any overarching, authoritative plan for the fisheries, and it is this openness that makes neoliberal nature-making so difficult to contest. In this sense, neoliberalization is better understood as an activity (rather than a set of institutions) that both responds to and shapes the different social and ecological contexts it operates in.[12]

Although the making of neoliberal natures may not be "true," this does not mean it is not real. As social theorists Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval write, "neo-liberalism is not merely destructive of rules, institutions and rights. It is also *productive* of certain kinds of social relations, certain ways of living, certain subjectivities. In other words, at stake in neo-liberalism is nothing more, or less, that the *form of our existence*—the way in which we are led to conduct ourselves, to relate to others and to ourselves" (Dardot and Laval 2013, 8). Over two hundred years ago, Arthur Young, an eighteenth-century agronomist and "improver," had a similar insight: "if you go into Banbury-market next Thursday you may distinguish the farmers from enclosures from those from open-fields; *quite a different sort of men*; the farmers are as much changed as their husbandry—quite new men, in point of knowledge and ideas" (Young cited in Barrell 2010, 71; emphasis added).[13] This simple observation captures how liberal forms of government transform individuals from targets of government policies into *instruments* of these policies, the means of achieving certain environmental and economic goals. This is evident in the context of transformations in fisheries management and environmental governance more generally.

In the past, fishermen were literally outside the reach of power, operating in the open seas, able to avoid what regulations existed through their peripheral location and the absence of any effective policing. This is commonly expressed in policy reports as noncompliance, a phenomenon borne out of a lack of regulation, control, security, and representation. The European Union has thus iden-

tified a new "culture of compliance" as the only way of achieving a sustainable fishing industry:

> Without active collaboration between them [industry and managers], even the best-drafted regulations founded on the best-researched science, and supported by carefully targeted subsidies can achieve little. Policy is only as good as its implementation. And in the final analysis, it is the people who work in the fishery who have to make that policy a reality, *by adopting it fully in their daily practice*. (Commission for Environmental Cooperation 2008a, 9; emphasis added)

Fishermen are no longer the passive and largely absent subjects of distant management and regulation but "active" participants in the management of the fisheries (Mikalsen and Jentoft 2001; Kooiman et al. 2005; Österblom et al. 2011; Wiber et al. 2004). Regulators see the inclusion of users in resource management not only as a response to weaknesses in previous institutional models but also as a more effective and productive form of governance (see Acheson 2003; Baland and Platteau 1996; Olsson et al. 2006). There is a growing acceptance that fisheries *cannot* be managed without the active support of fishermen (Jentoft and McCay 1995, 1996; Kooiman et al. 2008; Pomeroy 1997). The path toward the "sustainable" fisheries of the future does not therefore simply involve the exclusion of fishermen. Instead, it demands new forms of inclusion that reshape how individuals act and how they relate to other people and to their environments. These new forms of environmental governance work by incentivizing and inciting fishermen to relate to others and the worlds they inhabit in particular ways. As scholar Arun Agrawal writes, "policies aiming at greater decentralisation and participation are about new technologies of government. To be successful, they must redefine political relations, reconfigure institutional arrangements, and transform environmental subjectivities" (2006, 7). In this book I hope to show how ongoing efforts to manage and resolve the crisis of overfishing involves such far-reaching transformations, the production of new environmental

subjects capable of operating within new and distinct ecologies and economies.

Overview of the Book

The geographic, social, ecological, and economic diversity of the Irish and European fisheries helps us trace the iterative relationship between particular contexts and problems and the forms of government that emerge around and through them. The current management of the fisheries shows how European, national, regional, and local levels of government interact with nonstate actors (NGOs, multinational corporations, local business), consumers, and producers in different ways, challenging and reconfiguring the boundaries of public, private, and civil society (Swyngedouw 2004). The first three chapters illustrate these interactions by examining three different forms of environmental governmentality.

In chapter 1, I begin with an overview of how critical responses to overfishing over the past decade have culminated in the recent reform of the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in late 2012. The new CFP has stated the European Union's commitment to "returning" to a stable cycle of production in harmony with the "natural" cycle of biological reproduction. This is expressed in the goal of achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) in all fisheries by 2020. MSY is the highest number of fish that can be taken safely each year while maintaining maximum productivity of fish populations. The question facing European and Irish policy makers is how to achieve this goal when its management system, according to a report commissioned by the European Union (EU), has presided "over an unparalleled period of decline for Europe's fishing industries" (Symes 2007, 49). This report criticizes a top-down, command-and-control, bureaucratic system that does not reflect the reality of the fisheries nor respond to the needs of fishermen.

The anachronistic, inflexible nature of the previous management system is exemplified by the policy of fixed quotas. Established in 1983 as a way of equitably dividing up fish stocks between member states and fishermen, the fixed quota system guaranteed each fisherman a share of the marine resources. However, the expan-

sion of fishing capacity and the difficulty of matching fish catches with predetermined quotas has encouraged the controversial practice of dumping or discarding large quantities of non-quota fish at sea. In response, the new CFP has banned the practice of discarding. Although the ban appears to make economic and environmental sense and has met little resistance, it has far-reaching consequences for the fisheries and the way marine resources will be allocated. Arguably, the most controversial outcome is that the ban will require the introduction of individual transferable quotas (ITQs). The ITQ has been a controversial policy option because it effectively transforms access rights to the fisheries into assets that can be rented, bought, or sold.

The rationale behind the ban on discarding and the introduction of ITQs resonates with arguments that emerged in France and Britain in the late eighteenth century concerning the problem of grain scarcity. In a lecture from 1977, Foucault shows how these arguments were a key point in the development of a new relationship between knowledge and power, a relationship that gave rise to a new *liberal* mode of government. This development centered on the idea that the problem of grain scarcity was *real*, and that any effective analysis and policy making must begin from this assumption and not from a denial of this reality. In this chapter, I develop a connection between this early liberal perspective on the question of scarcity and the contemporary response to discarding and overfishing more generally in the European fisheries.

Although the ban on discards and the introduction of ITQ are the most significant policy changes in the CFP reform of 2012, the Irish government, European Union, and other transnational actors are designing other strategies that move beyond a classically liberal analysis of overfishing. Chapter 2 examines how the cultivation of new "green" opportunities in the fisheries sector shifts the focus of management from limited, marine resources to the environmental performance of fishermen and the market value that can be leveraged from it. In this chapter, I examine a particular project initiated by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), the Irish state agency responsible for developing the fishing industry, called the Environ-

mental Management System (EMS). Based on similar programs in Australia that manage environmental impacts in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, the EMS is essentially an auditing technology that allows fishermen to monitor their activities. It lets them "prove" their environmental credentials so that they can engage with regulatory authorities and gain accreditation for their catch. Eco-label accreditation aims to provide fishermen with greater access to markets and potentially higher prices for their catch. In this logic there is no contradiction between economic profitability and environmental sustainability.[14] As I show, however, the challenge of measuring and demonstrating environmental performance involves not only new auditing technologies but also highly uneven networks of transnational governance. Instead of competing with one another over limited marine resources, fishermen vie to measure, manipulate, and represent their environmental performance within these networks. I draw on Foucault's illuminating account of the distinction between liberal and neoliberal rationalities of government to establish what is at stake in this new logic of the "green" economy, specifically how it differs from liberal (and Malthusian) preoccupations with "natural" limits.[15]

The market-based tools described in chapters 1 and 2 both fit within familiar analyses of neoliberal policy-making. Chapter 3, however, examines another mode of governance that is often understood as an alternative to such policies. Community-based resource management is described as a "third-way" approach that moves beyond the limited choice between state-centered and market-based options. It is promoted particularly as a more effective form of environmental governance in small-scale, "traditional" spheres of resource exploitation (Berkes and Pomeroy 1997). Since the 1990s in Ireland, representatives of inshore fishermen and certain fisheries scientists have raised the threat of overexploitation in the inshore fisheries, particularly of lobster, the main commercial species. Over the past decade, through BIM, the Irish government has responded by attempting to introduce a framework for community-based lobster management.

In chapter 3, I examine the origins of community-based management and how rather than providing an alternative to liberal rea-

soning it represents a *different form* of this reasoning. It assumes the same liberal starting point as more dominant approaches to fisheries management: overfishing is the result of self-interested individuals over-exploiting a limited marine resource. What distinguishes the community-based approach is that it seeks to avoid the "tragedy of the commons" by devising institutional frameworks that are more flexible and adaptive than either private property regimes or direct state control.

My critical orientation toward the construction of new environmental subjects—as described in the first three chapters of the book—meant that the initial focus of my research was not on the experiences of fishermen themselves but rather on how new forms of fisheries management were attempting to mold the activities of fishermen within the new policy contexts of sustainability and the "green" economy (Amit 2003; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Law 2004; Marcus 1995).[16] Instead of grand diagnoses, these new assemblages of knowledge-power required an ethnographic mapping that concentrated on "the little mutations" taking place on the ground (Ong and 2005). I first envisaged my relationship with Castletownbere, the commercial fishing port in the South West of Ireland where I was based for sixteen months, as a site for the exploration of broader, cross-cutting (that is, global) tendencies in environmental governance and capitalist production.[17]

In the first three months of my research, I interviewed civil servants working in the Department of the Marine based in Clonakilty; National Parks and Wildlife Service staff in Glengarriff; researchers from the Beaufort project in Haulbowline, Cork; marine scientists in the Marine Institute in Galway; social scientists from the University of Galway; BIM development officers working on the ground in both Castletownbere and Dublin; representatives from the Castletownbere Fishermen's Cooperative; the owners of a seafood processing factory; and representatives from the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority and the South and West Fisheries Producers Organisation based in Castletownbere.

I carried out long interviews with these people in their offices or places of work. Interviews arranged through institutional connec-

tions were relatively formal. The BIM headquarters, for example, clearly set aside time for several employees to meet, present their work, and discuss particular issues raised in my email of inquiry. Other interviews, mainly those that took place in Castletownbere, arose out of informal contacts with people involved in the management of the fisheries (scientists, fisheries officers, civil servants) who passed on contact information of colleagues in other offices or agencies.

However, I soon came to realize during this fieldwork that often the only ground I was covering was that which was opened up for me by the institutional actors I was trying to critique.[18] By tracing the visible, articulate subjects and discourses that make up the world of fisheries management, I was replicating them in a way that did not seem particularly critical.[19] While it was important to document and describe these new modes of environmental governance and the way they were modifying, including, and excluding fishermen, my research was not able to see anything outside them. Although I wanted to complicate the idea of "fixing" a research subject, I found myself doing just that, "fixing" the power relations and knowledge practices that were generating new economic and environmental subjects (see Li 2005, 2006).

Critical social theory tends to reinstate power relations by positioning the subject as nothing more than an epiphenomenon, "the outcome of a complex constellation of textual, material, institutional, historical factors" (Blackman et al. 2008). This understanding can end up dissolving subjectivity into a variety of generative models (culture, *habitus*, assemblage, or apparatus), ensuring that experience operates only in "ensnared spaces"[20]:

> Governmentality theory is contradictory: it suggests that experience is discursively constituted, but it critiques the attempt to research experience on the basis that it can only invoke experience as fixed, a given. The cost of jettisoning a close examination of the particulars of subjectification (researching lived experience is one way of doing this) is to deter engagement with the problem of alternative modes of political engagement. (Stephenson 2003, 141)

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Theorists Dimitris Papadopoulos and Niamh Stephenson have sought to address the loss of experience in some contemporary critical research by turning to the everyday, continuous experience that unfolds outside modes of representation, which is "*imperceptible*" (Papadopoulos and Stephenson 2006). Instead of focusing on how certain aspects of our experience are represented and made to work within contemporary forms of governance, Papadopoulos and Stephenson thus attend to the ways everyday experiences escape such representation. A methodology of imperceptible experience must turn away from an exclusive analysis of "optic" strategies of inclusion and articulation (such as my interviews with "experts" and analysis of new tools of participative management) to the everyday "haptic" strategies employed by people in the often mundane navigation of work and life. The haptic describes the unspectacular experiences of people as they unfold around places, people, animals, and artifacts. They are thus unspectacular in two ways: neither extraordinary nor necessarily sensible within the "optic" regimes of inclusive governance.

This reconceptualization of subjectivity as something situated, relational, and distributed across time and space helped me address a challenge I faced during my research: the recognition that my "critical" concern for new forms of environmental governance was eclipsing the richness of the immediate and everyday social and material worlds that existed in Castletownbere (Gibson-Graham 2006; St. Martin 2007, 2009). In this approach there was no sense of how people in Castletownbere might act at a distance from dominant economic and governmental rationalities, not through explicit resistance but through practical forms of world-making that relied on and constituted different ways of knowing and doing.

My experiences living and working in Castletownbere and knowing its people, houses, roads, boats, land, and sea are hard to describe.[21] In the words of Julie Katherine Gibson-Graham, it was a place "which was not fully yoked into a system of meaning, not entirely subsumed to and defined within a (global) order" (Gibson-Graham 2005, xxxiii). When I travelled from Castletownbere to conduct interviews and returned to Dublin every so often, I soon

became bound up in these everyday social relations and networks. Simply by being there, I developed attachments and relationships with particular places and with people who I would meet during the course of daily interaction on the road, in the pub, or in the shops. It was through such chance relationships that I finally managed to get out to sea, mostly on the small, inshore boats that go out for a day at a time catching crab, prawns, and lobsters. Going out to sea for the first time and the "thickening" of my relationship with this place and the people who lived there opened up a different orientation in my research. I came to see fishermen from a different perspective: although they were embedded within capitalist relations of production to different degrees, exploiting fish stocks to make a living, they were also part of different social relations and practices that unfolded through the places, people, and things that populated everyday life. Here was a different value to ethnography: the tracing not of global assemblages of power and capital but of rich, situated worlds that are more palpable than they are representable (Connelly and Clandinin 2000).[22] Although these social relations and practices may be minor, and largely invisible to an outside observer, they provide a different starting point for thinking about the organization of human and nonhuman life in a context of mounting ecological crises.

In the final chapter, I draw together ethnographic accounts from my time in Castletownbere with theoretical insights from anthropology, feminism, and posthumanist social theory to discuss what I call the more-than-human commons. At the heart of this concept is the activity of *commoning*, an ongoing exchange between humans and nonhumans that is grounded in the immediate and intimate understanding that the world is *shared*. This does not spring from any idealized conception of how things should be, but from the everyday social and material needs that exist in a place like Castletownbere: it is precisely because an inshore fisherman operates in such an unpredictable, precarious environment, beyond the clock and the set wage, that he must rely on people and access to a diversity of resources to sustain himself (Van der Ploeg 2008; Scott 1998). At the same time, the interdependence between people and the place

they live and work is not fixed or automatic. There is not a set stock of "natural" resources on one side and a community of human, economic agents on the other, but a dynamic, widely distributed mesh of social and natural, material and immaterial resources that are co-produced and circulate among those who participate in the making of the commons.

Understood from this perspective, the more-than-human commons, and the activity of commoning that produces and sustains it, allows us to break with the tragic, liberal distinction between passive, biophysical resources and the economically rationalizing human subject. In contrast to *homo economicus* or the neoliberal entrepreneur carving a linear path through the world, the subject of the commons is always part of "thick" interdependent relations with human and nonhuman others. This multiplicity and diversity is integral to the vitality of the commons; commoning involves the ongoing interweaving of human and nonhuman capacities to create a world that is lively and abundant, not passive and scarce. Drawing together the concepts of care and reciprocity, however, I show that the more-than-human commons still operates within limits, limits that are not fixed but worked out through negotiation and experiment. The intention of the final chapter is not to romanticize a fishing community or deny the existence of capitalist relations of production but rather to identify these "invisible" forms of commoning and the ways they constitute different subjectivities, value, and knowledge. This analysis carries on the important work of feminist scholars who politicized the sphere of reproduction not as a "natural" phenomenon but as something that is always social and collective; breaks the hold of liberal, humanistic epistemologies that individualize human subjectivity and exclude the nonhuman from world-making processes; and finally, reveals the always changing and contested relationship between the commons and enclosure.