

IFQ Programs and Rural Communities

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Two recent global reviews of the social and cultural effects of IFQ programs conclude that crew and skippers, small-scale fishermen, new entrants, and rural and Indigenous communities primarily experience the negative impacts of IFQ programs [1,2]. This short summary considers only the latter group; rural and Indigenous communities are affected by disproportionate outflow of quota, and more fundamentally by a lack of fit between IFQ programs and rural community fisheries [3].

What We've Learned in Alaska

The IFQ Program Review report includes a summary of key research of rural community impacts of the IFQ program in Alaska. A major impact of the IFQ program has been the large outflow of fishing rights from the smallest historic fishing communities. The Council recognized this problem by implementing the CQE program. While a few CQE communities have seen some return of quota share, most have not. Nearly half of the eligible CQE communities have lost 50% or more of their halibut quota share since initial issuance (seven of these have lost 100%). Differential impacts of the IFQ program have also created environmental justice concerns. Low income and Alaska Native fishermen are more likely to sell quota share and less likely to purchase quota share [4]. A randomized, large-scale survey of IFQ holders also showed that residents of small (<1500) rural communities in the Gulf of Alaska showed the least support for the IFQ program, while residents of CDQ communities expressed the most support [5]. Rural community members describe negative impacts to core fishing values, disempowerment of crew, non-owners, and the next generation, and long-lasting conflict and community divisiveness [6].

As one example in Alaska, Kodiak's Alutiiq villages¹ are facing a crisis of lost fisheries access. Within one generation, there's been a:

- 70% decrease in individual halibut IFQ holdings²
- 100% decrease in individual sablefish IFQ holdings
- 84% decrease in the number of young people owning state fishing permits
- 67% decrease in the number of state permits overall

Small boat harbors are empty. Declines in fishing access and opportunities affect community life and sustainability. Communities are depopulating and facing social problems. In a recent school survey, less than 25% of Ouzinkie youth have ever had any commercial fishing engagement (despite nearly all students having multi-generational family ties to fishing); less than 10% of students in Ouzinkie see a positive future for young people in their community and parents actively encourage their young people to leave the community [10]. Ouzinkie is just one example of a long-standing, culturally rich fishing community where lost access to their fisheries threatens future viability.

What We've Learned Internationally

Similar patterns of dispossession in rural and Indigenous fishing communities have occurred worldwide when fishing rights have been limited and monetized. Nations have been responding by declaring the right to fish a cultural right and a human right. Management programs have been amended to include provisions to facilitate special consideration of, and entry for, youth, small-scale fishermen, and rural and Indigenous communities. For example:

Iceland recognized the outmigration of IFQs from rural communities by creating a *community quota program* in 2003. In response to social equity concerns and a decree of the United Nations Human Rights Committee that ruled that Iceland's ITQ program violated Icelanders' human right to work, a *coastal fishing program* was

¹ Kodiak's Alutiiq villages include the communities of Akhiok, Karluk, Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions.

² This figure differs from what is presented in the IFQ Program Review. There is an error stating that residents of Akhiok held 191,130 quota share units in 2015; Akhiok holdings in 2015 were 0. The holdings attributed to Larsen Bay, correctly in the RAM database, are holdings by an individual whose residence is in Kodiak, not Larsen Bay.

created in 2009. The program allows residents of coastal communities in four regions to participate in day fisheries without purchasing quota [7].

Norway has implemented a range of measures designed to ensure fleet diversity and small-scale fishing opportunities in its Individual Vessel Quota (IVQ) fisheries, including:

Recruitment quota was created in 2010. Young fishermen under the age of 30 can apply for recruitment quota at no cost. Recruitment quota cannot be sold. The program has been well received by young fishermen wanting to enter the industry.

Open group fishery is intended to provide fishing opportunity for small-scale fishermen who did not qualify for an initial allocation of cod quota under the IVQ system. Participants in the open group fishery are restricted to small-scale vessel owners (i.e. vessels under 11 meters in length) who have an annual income of less than roughly \$40,000 USD.

Provisions to Protect Indigenous Access are aimed specifically at improving access for Norway's Saami population. These include an annual set-aside of cod and crab quota that is available only to open group fishermen living in Saami districts. These provisions favor small-scale fishermen and have catalyzed the revival of some fjord fisheries since 2010 [8,9].

We detail many other national and international examples of fisheries managers who have made amendments to IFQ and permit programs to provide better opportunities for rural communities, Indigenous communities, and young and/or new entrants on our Graying of the Fleet project website (fishermen.alaska.edu) [10]. Our recent research in the Bristol Bay and Kodiak regions suggest that new entry points are necessary in Alaska to address this crisis of fisheries access. Shifts in access management for both federal and state fisheries that better accommodate rural community fisheries are needed.

Selected References

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