



Policy disconnections in the regulation of sustainable seafood in Australia

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Abstract

Wild capture fisheries are managed by governments on behalf of their populations to address societal concerns related to the exploitation of marine resources. In Australia, a key concern for citizens and consumers is the sustainable management of fisheries to prevent overfishing, and overfishing is mainly how sustainability in fisheries is understood. This is also a central concern for the Australian fishing industry, in that social acceptability is a key factor in ensuring their continuing access to the resource. At the global scale, trade is one of the main pressures on fisheries' sustainability, with demand from markets around the world driving unsustainable fishing practices. In Australia, however, ensuring that imported seafood is sustainably fished is not seen as the responsibility of the public governors. As a result, foods from both sustainable and potentially less-sustainable fisheries have equal access to the market and remain largely undifferentiated at the point of sale. This shows a disconnection between strong government efforts to regulate domestic fisheries to prevent overfishing and no government effort to ensure a level playing field for Australian fisheries in the domestic market. This research explores whether the specific sociocultural environment in the governance of fisheries production and trade can explain this disconnection and examines potential avenues for policy change. Within an interactive governance paradigm, it uses tools from deliberative policy and discourse analysis to unveil the discourses framing the current policy frameworks for sustainability in the harvest and post-harvest spaces in Australia. It explores the current configuration of the actors in governance and the potential to induce policy change to ensure the sustainability for all seafood sold at the retail level. The analysis shows that the Australian government's strong fisheries management record for domestic fisheries is undermined by its reluctance to intervene in processes downstream. This reluctance produces regulatory inconsistency in the treatment of imported and domestic seafood and inhibits the capacity of domestic fisheries to communicate their sustainability at the consumer interface. In the past few years, the control of imports to prevent illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing has provided a justification for regulations based on traceability systems in the United States and European Union. These regulations aim to provide a level playing field for well-managed fisheries and prevent seafood fraud. This

justification has yet to be institutionalised in the Australian context; however, traceability regulations may become a feasible response to future industry demands.

Certificate of original authorship

I, Sonia Garcia Garcia, declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of PhD of International Studies, in the School of International Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise reference or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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List of Abbreviations

AFMA	Australian Fisheries Management Authority
AFNS	Australian Fish Names Standard
AMCS	Australian Marine Conservation Society
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
BAP	Best Aquaculture Practices
CCAMLR	Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
CCSBT	Convention for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDS	Catch Documentation Scheme
CITES	Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (of Wild Fauna and Flora)
CLG	Common Language Group
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CoOL	Country of Origin Labelling
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
EC	European Commission
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EPBC	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (of the United Nations)
FRDC	Fisheries Research and Development Corporation
FSANZ	Food Standards Australia New Zealand
GAP	(Global) Good Agriculture Practices
GVP	Gross Value of Production
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IPOA-IUU	International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (Fishing)
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (Fishing)

MFMA	The Master Fish Merchants' Association of Australia
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSF	Multiple Streams Framework
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPOA-IUU	National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (Fishing)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NZ	New Zealand
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation
PNA	Parties to the Nauru Agreement
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
SA	South Australia
SAFS	Status of Australian Fish Stocks
SIA	Seafood Industry Australia
SIAA	Seafood Importers of Australasia
SIMP	Seafood Import Monitoring Program
SSIA	Southern Shark Industry Alliance
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TDS	Trade Documentation Scheme
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
US	United States (of America)
WA	Western Australia
WLTO	Wildlife Trade Operations
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund / World Wide Fund for Nature