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Making new blue economy in Kaikōura: a participatory process approach

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Report

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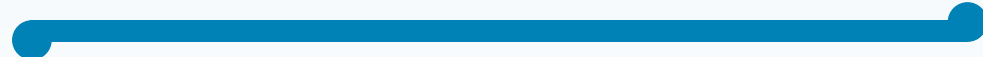
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More information on this project, visit www.sustainableseaschallenge.co.nz/new-blue-economy-in-kaikoura-a-participatory-process-approach



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Nicolas Lewis
Project Leader

1 Background to the Study

Over the 20 years from 2000, Kaikōura has developed a thriving mixed marine economy involving community members and diverse enterprises at multiple scales across multiple sectors. This economy has created incomes, jobs and subsistence opportunities from marine tourism to seafood, and multiple enterprises that support or derive income from them. As an example of a blue economy led regional development it appeared to have aligned ecological, economic and social initiatives that offered an exemplar for other New Zealand regions and a model of New Zealand blue economy potential.

On November 19, 2016, the region suffered a 7.8 magnitude earthquake that brought much of its economy to a standstill and threatened to permanently disrupt the defining alignments of its blue economy development model.

Kaikōura's economies had to be remade. The initial recovery involved the interventions of multiple external parties in the recovery process, disrupting the region's social and economic relations. As these disruptions settled, we identified an opportunity to contribute positively to the recovery effort and a unique opportunity to examine community-led economy making and participatory environmental management in real time as Kaikōura refashioned its economy-environment relations.

1.1 Research design

The research built on two on-going projects within Sustainable Seas: *Creating Value in a Blue Economy*; and *Testing participatory processes for marine management*. Team members in our research team were involved in both these other projects and were able to draw on insights and research materials derived from them.

This research established key stakeholder relations and knowledge foundations in blue economy, economic development and participatory management. The project tested, refined and elaborated key concepts developed in conjunction with these projects: participatory processes, blue economy, geographical rent, resourcefulness, and value propositions.

1.2 Research Aims

The project represented an opportunity to

- identify extant and emerging economic initiatives and aspirations and relate those to ecological and social initiatives
- examine how economic investment can be tied to a collective value proposition at a community-wide scale to fashion economic futures in innovative ways the project
- co-investigate a real time experiment in economy making
- test the potential of blue economy and sustainability ideas to stimulate investment directions that are beyond business as usual

- establish critical components in the translation of the value proposition into necessary on-ground economic behaviours and story lines
- complement efforts by other community members to rebuild economy in the region

1.3 Research Approach

The empirical part of the project was conducted in five phases, each associated with one visit to the region and related engagements.

Visit 1: What is happening / stakeholder engagement / what does post-earthquake Kaikōura economy look like? Interviews with local government officials and community leaders.

Visit 2: Canvassing community views (attended community meeting), identifying and mapping key activities, what local assets (resources, capabilities, visions) may be converted into a blue economy proposition, who is involved and what's driving them, how are they thinking, what are they emphasising, and what are they doing. Interviews with five business owners and investors (at all scales), community leaders, and ecological spokespersons.

Visit 3: Follow-up with key informants, meet with community leaders. On this visit, attended a community research symposium on ecological recovery.

Visit 4: Work with community and economy stakeholders to identify and develop ethical coordinates and provenance propositions that will support emergent activities and practices. Present findings to community audience (two presentations outlining co-developed strategies).

Visit 5: Work with community leaders to outline research findings and fashion a value proposition that combines provenance propositions, investment visions, and socio-ecologically ethical behaviours; and indicates development priorities

1.4 Data collection

The project involved extensive document review of material related to community development aspirations; 14 interviews (community leaders, a leader in the earthquake recovery team, businesses, and local government officials); three years of observation of recovery initiatives and economic change in Kaikōura derived from annual student-focused field trips and associated local engagement practices; a roundtable conversation with community leaders; attendance at two community research symposia; and co-research engagements with members of the Resilience to Nature's Challenge National Science Challenge.

We met with local business people, Kaikōura District Council (KDC) officials, and the community organisation Te Korowai o te Tai Marokura (TKoTM), which is given force by community will and a local environmental stewardship mandated in a national Act of

Parliament. We also met with leaders from Ngai Tahu as part of our wider research initiatives. We presented material from our research to community meeting on two occasions – once to TKoTM independently, and once to a community meeting that it organised. The substance of this paper has been discussed with TKoTM, and its implications and the opportunities it may open for reassembling elements of the emerging GRP are part of on-going conversations.

The project was designed to link two on-going projects in Sustainable Seas – one examining blue economy and the other participatory processes – and extend them into a rare opportunity for case study research. Within the limits established by prior ethical protocols associated with both projects, we were able to draw on data and insights from these other two projects, and in turn inform these projects (Le Heron et al. 2019).

2 Key Findings (in Summary)

The project produced novel insights about the possibilities of regional blue economy development, domestically and globally. Our key findings are outlined in the text below, but can be summarised in terms of ten first-order propositions about how to imagine and practice a participatory, blue economy led regional development.

- Regional development is *a question of assembling* different entanglements of interests, agencies, value propositions, and diverse resources into geographical rent platform(s).
- There is significant creative value to be derived from focusing on *what is being assembled, how and by and for whom*.
- *Te Tiriti is a unique and extremely valuable regional development asset* and source of participatory governance and blue economy momentum
- Regional development research and practice must *recognise and embrace the diverse development work performed by a host of actors*
- ‘Doing’ regional development with local groups produces a regional development that can be aligned with economic and national interests
- *Co-development of value propositions can produce a resilient regional development platform* that reappraises resources, analyses potentialities and pitfalls, and demonstrates impacts for on-going positive change.
- *The state remains important* as a set of investment projects, institutions, and stabilising interventions that offer up specific opportunities to enhance regional resourcefulness
- Reconceptualising the practice and politics of regional development shifts attention from universal trickle-down policies to *identifying and initiating opportunities to assemble collectively ‘owned’ projects*
- *There is significant potential in knowing and performing regional development in non-standard ways, and significant dangers in suppressing creativity through standard measures, models and templates*
- There is much to gain by exploring projects of commoning in imagining and organising blue economy transitions

These propositions are derived from the Kaikōura experience, which we outline below in a summary of a publication that is currently in submission.

3 Researching in shifting contexts

This research project was very much designed as an opportunity to learn from and contribute to the shifting terrain of Kaikōura's earthquake recovery. The research represented a contribution from the Sustainable Seas Challenge to that recovery in a key national blue economy setting and one that was within the initial Challenge area.

The research design was context dependent. Sometimes social research can also become overwhelmed by shifting contexts. These can provide rich insights but can also disrupt and/or creatively reorient research directions.

3.1 Research in a post-earthquake world

Not surprisingly in a period of recovery after a major earthquake, things were changing rapidly when we began. The community was suffering significant research fatigue. Whilst we delayed the project and made subtle changes in the research design to accommodate that fatigue, fatigue was a factor in keeping us from some of the conversations we had hoped to generate.

Our desire to contribute immediate benefits had to be tempered by realities on the ground. Our research was driven by the objective of working with businesses and community actors at a disaggregated level (individual businesses and diverse community actors).

Instead, we were appropriately obliged to operate through gatekeepers. This had significant advantages given their helpfulness and the extent of their knowledge, but we ultimately canvassed fewer perspectives than we originally hoped. In fact, our research benefited enormously from this subtle change in methodology.

First, the experience taught us two things: Kaikōura was rethinking and redeveloping its economy by drawing on a rich community capital and well entrenched social institutions; and second such institutions provided a level of collective thought and energy that we had not expected. Working with established community organisations opened our eyes to the potential of collectivity and commoning in the middle of capitalist economy.

Second, the experience led us to draw more heavily on other research programmes – enriching our own analysis and extending our own insights into other Challenge research and projects beyond. We connected more fully to the participatory processes research themes elsewhere in the Challenge, the post-earthquake ecological research projects within and beyond the Sustainable Seas Challenge, the work of social researchers in the Nature's

Challenges National Science Challenge on community resilience, and Dr Hikuroa's on-going work with local groups associated with student projects.

3.2 Research in a fundamentally changing political environment

The earthquake recovery effort that dominated Kaikōura's economy and community through the course of the research became entangled in national regional development policy in ways that complicated our research. We sought to identify organic bottom up blue economy value propositions in the wake of the earthquake. Local thinking, however, became quickly swamped by the launch of the Provincial Growth Fund in late 2017. Different visions became packaged to meet the criteria of the fund and positioned in competitive tension, rather than in the more open and organic ways we had hoped to find and to engage with.

The Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) was the first significant regional development funding package since the early 1980s. The PGF revitalised regional economic development imaginaries across New Zealand. It focused attention on sustainable development, infrastructure, inclusive community development, and Māori economy – all key touchstones for blue economy and for Kaikōura. In its first year, the PGF funded a cornucopia of novel community and regional development projects. In normal circumstances, as we now know them after our research (ie creative community leadership and fast-moving collective local action), we might have expected a plethora of innovative blue economy applications from Kaikōura. Preoccupied with earthquake recovery, however, Kaikōura was unable to take advantage of this early period of the PGF to propose something radically different under the scheme in 2017-18.

Orthodox economic discipline was quickly re-imposed on the PGF by requiring that projects be submitted through regional Economic Development Agencies (EDAs) and subjected to formal feasibility studies. The ideas that had come forward in Kaikōura became consolidated and framed into three more conventional looking development projects, which were presented to the Kaikōura District Council and then turned over to the Canterbury Regional EDA, which applied for PGF funding to prepare feasibility studies. The studies were conducted by an economic consultancy. The PGF gave Kaikōura's recovery initiatives a new momentum and aspiration, but these initiatives became framed in standard ways by external actors.

On the one hand, this took interest away from our research and forced us to focus increasingly on the PGF led processes, which were conducted outside Kaikōura and behind commercial and political sensitivities. The process took eighteen months and forced us to delay reporting on our findings. In the words of one respondent:

To be honest the PGF is no longer community related and solely council, external investors and consultants. The community has been asking for what is happening and have been unable to get details or an update. This is resulting in frustration of industries in Kaikōura and I know Paua hatcheries have approached them for an

update. The business association has also requested an update and for the community to be informed. As I understand KDC is making a promotional video for external investors to invest and move to Kaikōura and as I understand the community is being told that this will be the method of providing an update on the projects. As you are probably aware KDC is also going through a sustainability review which is due out in August. This will outline what the future of council looks like.

More positively, it allowed us to observe a real process of regional development, warts and all, in real time. It exposed the contest in future visions between business as usual and community-led ideas. We were also able to witness the resourcefulness and resilience of community thinking in relation to changing external fields of possibilities, as they dealt with the frustrations.

We outline our findings below, which are summarised from a paper in submission with leading global journal *Regional Studies*.

4 Building Regional Development Platforms in Kaikōura

Our research examines 25 years of diverse regional development initiatives undertaken in Kaikōura, an isolated coastal region in New Zealand. The case foregrounds the potentiality of opportunities-focused assessments of resourcefulness and community-driven investment. Drawing on research alongside communities and regional and national development stakeholders, we theorise what we term ‘geographic rent platforms’ (GRPs). We propose that GRPs provide the basis for a radical rethinking of regional development that emphasises pragmatic, generative and community-driven interventions.

4.1 Introduction to the research

Kaikōura is a small, isolated resource region in New Zealand - a regional service centre, an almost compulsory stop on a long journey between Christchurch and the top of the South Island, and an internationally renowned marine mammal eco-tourism destination. In November 2016 much of its infrastructure was destroyed, prompting a massive regional redevelopment initiative.

Kaikōura’s development exemplifies the increasingly significant role played by Māori as collective investors, environmental guardians, community leaders, and development authorities in contemporary regional development in New Zealand. Māori are forcing a collaborative, bottom-up, social and environmental justice-oriented framework on regional development; one that offers opportunities to rethink regional development more generally.

The research developed new conceptual and methodological tools for regional development by re-picturing economic rent as *geographic rent* and treating it as a return to place that is generally appropriated by capital. The centrality of rent in capitalist dynamics means that

regional development strategies are designed to stimulate and trap rent yielding economic activities in regions. Yet rent is either ignored or dismissed as unearned and unjust income.

The concept of *geographic rent platforms* (GRPs) makes rent visible and allows for a regional development that actively pursues rent as a collectively generated return to place, its people, and environments. By asking what regional economy futures are being assembled, how, and by and for whom in a specific setting, the study introduced a new approach to conceptualising and practising regional development in any setting.

The research demonstrates the value of rethinking regional development in any setting and extends knowledge about resource-oriented economies; indigenous leadership of regional economies; and transitioning to new economy-environment relations. We make two arguments: a focus on GRPs offers a basis for understanding and stimulating collectively initiated interventions and institutional initiatives; and regional development knowledge, research and practice needs to recognise and directly support the potential of community-led projects centred on mobilising common resources.

4.2 Geographic rent platforms

Focusing attention on rent directs attention to the potential of the commons and to the winners and losers of enclosure. We see it as a useful concept in four ways. It:

- highlights sources of value in place, from land and resources to place-specific configurations of social and physical infrastructure and capital
- points to possibilities of rent creation from careful management of commons or investment in social infrastructure
- suggests the need to think through how to return it to place (e.g. royalties)

We conclude that rent is (a) *geographical* - a return on the special qualities of place, intrinsic or created through investment or regulation (the added *return to conducting activities here rather than there*); and (b) *an objective for regional development intervention*

We draw on three further inter-related concepts that help us to reappraise resources and mobilise collective action to secure rents in regional development terms

- (1) 'regional value proposition' (RVP) - strategically formulated promises of the value to be delivered to regions from producing goods/services in that place founded on community objectives in relation to geographic rent possibilities. RVPs presume a capability to organise collectively and shape future outcomes *beyond specific transactions*
- (2) Development platforms - assemblages of multiple actors, objects, social futures, narratives, and trajectories at work in economy, which are understood to be open, emergent and the products of 'connectivity, 'collectivity', collective practice and the co-production of knowledge
- (3) resourcefulness - resources are not intrinsic but made/assembled through collective practice and transformation and the cultivation of capability, an

observation that displaces calculations of growth potential at the heart of development thinking with conceptions of place-based capability and possibility.

Putting rent platforms, value propositions and resourcefulness together, we imagine a GRP to be a situated assemblage of thought, capability and action for the promotion of collective economy. It is a knowledge strategy to narrate and enact possible collective futures.

This is not business as usual in regional development thinking, which tends to invisibilise rent, resourcefulness and regional value propositions beneath an idealised conception of markets and their operation, treat rent as profit, and ignore the question of who benefits from it. The idea of a GRP gives a practical and conceptual form to what Tomaney (2010) labels 'place-based development'.

Our argument is that since the late 1980s in New Zealand, the state has largely withdrawn from directive planning of regional development, idealisations of the free market and various forms of market governance have ignored the fates of regions, and periodic interest in new development theories have failed to mobilise meaningful bottom up initiatives. This is why the PGF was conceived, and why it has been so widely welcomed in the regions.

In this research, we start from the assumption that to address the challenge of regional development in contemporary settings. International evidence suggests that encouraging collective action stimulates projects that generate social wealth and have the potential to return rents to the collective that produces value. We need to pay more attention to mobilising collaborative agency and imagining and negotiating collective futures.

This places a premium on reimagining resourcefulness, originating RVPs through participatory processes, and collectively assembling GRPs for the collective good that are incomprehensible via a top down governmental gaze. Focusing on real practices and contests rather than economic abstractions such as sectors or productivity sharpens understandings of the relation between value and power. In New Zealand these insights are all the more pertinent in a context where regional development is bound up with Treaty partnership.

4.3 Māori economy: resourcing and revitalising regional development

New Zealand's development trajectories are intricately entangled in the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti) settlement process that has returned illegally alienated assets to Māori since the mid-1990s. These include large tracts of land, some significant natural resources, and a significant proportion of the national fishery.

Any process of contemporary regional development must address the central role played by Māori authorities and economic actors, the significance of Māori economy in terms of size, resource base and approaches to economy, and the extent of statutory and non-statutory commitments to various levels of co-management and co-governance of resources with Māori. Any planning for, or account of, economic change must recognise all questions of resourcefulness, value propositions and geographical rent are entangled in Māori rights,

interests and aspirations, as is all action of the state. Attention to Treaty Partnership means new regional development practices, institutions and statecraft, as well as the powerful presence of Māori economy actors.

Treaty considerations are entrenched at every level of nation-building, government and economy, and in all operational processes of state agencies and the legal, scientific, financial and technical apparatus of nation. Māori have an institutionalised place in all public-private economic relations, meaning that these relations are fractured and reconfigured them into triadic state-Māori-capital relations.

With iwi regionally centred, national government and the governance of resource economy are increasingly subject to regional debates over value propositions and regional futures. Māori economy is very much regional development in practice.

Replicated across the nation, it involves recovery, restoration and revitalisation of geographic rents in projects that aim to re-set history and geography and build collective capability for intergenerational political and economic projects that centre environmental well-being and vitality. Creating resourcefulness in these terms is highly strategic, with iwi grasping opportunities to assemble resource economies according to Māori principles and practices, extend their asset wealth, and secure greater sovereignty over land and sea.

Indigenous scholars commonly frame accounts of these entanglements of Māori economy, Treaty Partnership, and the emergence of new forms of governance in terms of colonising and decolonising processes. Our project starts from different conceptual grounds (geographical rent, resourcefulness, value propositions, regional development) but carries aligned criticisms of the formation of colonial space economies and contemporary capitalism and economic management. It also confirms that Māori are doing economy differently and redistributing geographic rents from resource economies in the form of collective intergenerational investment and enhanced guardianship of the land and sea that gave rise to them.

4.4 Assembling geographic rent platforms

Kaikōura has been the subject of a series of regional development initiatives over the last 25 years. These have included eco-venture tourism based on marine mammals, a hapu-community-led development centred on marine guardianship, the infrastructure-led rebuild of the region after the devastating earthquake of 2016, and a set of projects proposed under the national Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) initiative. Each initiative has been launched against the background of Kaikōura's position as a key transit point on the main highway and a rural/regional centre in New Zealand's 20th century resource and pastoral economy based national development model (Pawson et al. 2018). Each encompasses a re-visioning of resourcefulness founded on different assemblages of geographical scale, narratives of place, value propositions, stocks of financial, natural, and social capital, and established economic realities and opportunities contingent on outside factors. Each has offered rent-making opportunities and can be interpreted as a different GRP.

Table 2 summarises represents this regional development history as a series of GRPs that assemble investment initiatives and institutional framings. The GRPs and the periods they define are far from discrete. Rather, they reveal a *jostling co-existence* within which multiple actors in Kaikōura have creatively assembled and reassembled geographic rent platforms in response to opportunity and threat. In what follows, we introduce each of these GRPs, outline their underlying value propositions and projects of resourcefulness, and examine the ways in which they have been assembled. We highlight the work of collective action and imagination of collective futures.

Table 1: Geographic Rent Platforms in Kaikōura 1970-2020

Geographical rent platforms	Key actors	Key assets	Value propositions
Regional resource economy	Councils, ministries, sectors, farmers/foresters/fishers, SME retailers	Natural resources: land, sea, location	Regional service centre
Community based resource economy	Ngai Tahu, TKoTM, Department of Conservation	Legislation, Egg-model of governance, Whakapapa (people in place/collectivity)	Guardianship of commons 'Fishing with abundance'
Enterprise driven eco-tourism	Whale Watch and other private enterprises, Destination Kaikōura	Kaikōura Whale Sanctuary Location: Ki uta ki tai beauty, Hikurangi Canyon	Sustainability, SME-led ecotourism 'NZ's ultimate tourist experience'
Infrastructure-led recovery	NCTIR (state and infrastructure capital)	Restoration fund Social capital	Restore, upgrade, extend infrastructure
Community-led ki uta ki tai food economy	TKoTM, KDC, Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura, University of Canterbury	Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) TKoTM networks, Māori economy	Blue Economy (multi-sectoral, ki uta ki tai, inclusive, sustainable)
Tourism and Amenity Migration	Private capital (local - global), EDA / External consultants, Destination Kaikōura, KDC	PGF / External capital, Natural resources	Tourism-led growth Hospitality and retail Amenity immigration

Source: Lewis et al. 2020

4.5 Community based resource economy

Kaikōura is an important centre in the rohe of South Island iwi, Ngai Tahu. Ngai Tahu are prominent investors and play pivotal roles in national, regional and local politics, governance, and resource management. They have built a large and successful economy and pioneered the negotiation of new regional futures (Reid et al. 2019). This has included bringing significant inshore and coastal commons under their jurisdiction, and under the sway of traditional management principles. A significant early move, for example, involved the creation of Customary Protected Areas for every marae around most of the South Island coast. These spaces of Māori economic control reframed redefined resourcefulness in terms of place-based knowledge and Māori environmental management principles.

The establishment of customary protected areas in Kaikōura has underpinned much of the region's development outlined in Table 1. Much of this impact has been delivered alongside TKoTM, which was established in 2002 to steward local environments.

TKoTM defines its purpose as 'leading the community to achieve a flourishing, rich and healthy environment ..[in a context where].. opportunities abound to sustain the needs of present and future generations'. At the core of its approach lie commitments to 'perpetuating the mauri and wairua (*life force and spirit*)' of the area and the careful cultivation of close relationships with iwi authorities, other community organisations, and regional and national government agencies.

TKoTM describes its work as leading 'the effort to enhance the role of local leadership and to apply the philosophy of gifts and gains to achieve a flourishing, rich and healthy environment'. It lists its most significant contribution as the formalisation of the Kaikōura Marine Strategy (KMS) in 2012, which strengthened the marine commons and local control over them (Davies et al. 2018).

Underpinned by support from Ngai Tahu, the KMS prefigured an Act of Parliament that established environmental protection measures including marine protected areas (MPAs) and customary reserves for traditional food gathering. The Act established the Kaikōura Whale Sanctuary and the globally significant Hikurangi Marine Reserve, which covers the mouth of the Kaikōura Canyon, a feeding ground for Kaikōura's whale and dolphin populations. TKoTM's volunteer representatives serve on the Kaikōura Marine Guardians group that has formal responsibility for advising government ministers on the administration of the Reserves.

Its stewardship mandate has enabled TKoTM to lead efforts alongside Ngai Tahu to use the reserves in ways that reconfigure relations among capital, state, iwi and community into GRPs founded on collective interests rather than private capital accumulation.

TKoTM was set the challenge of producing a management and governance model that translated the requirements for legislation, government support, and into workable local solutions (Le Heron et al. 2019a, 2019b). It built what it terms an 'egg-model of governance', through which a "white" of advisors from iwi, and central and local government agencies support the directives of a "yolk" of local leaders.

This governance model is in itself a significant regional development resource, but it also laid the foundation for a marine spatial planning framework, which we interpret to be a GRP. This framework has its own economic development slogan ('fishing for abundance'). Centred on the KMS, the egg-model of governance inverts conventional top-down goal setting. It establishes a collective vision and control over strategy, vision and the creation and appropriation of geographic rents. It encompasses a set of value propositions, secures the commons, enhances Māori customary and commercial fishing rights, and holds together political and economic alliances between iwi, community groups and government agencies.

TKoTM is a pioneering example of successful community-led, collaborative economic development centred on environmental stewardship. Today, it remains vibrant and at the core of community-government-iwi-business discussions about regional futures nearly 20 years after its formation. In all these respects, has earned and retained the support of key government agencies and has been closely bound up with the aspirations and political force

of Ngai Tahu. Ngai Tahu are prominent figures and office holders within TKoTM, which in many senses became a deliver vehicle for Ngai Tahu's marine protected area strategy in the Kaikōura region.

TKoTM's longevity highlights five key dimensions of what it takes to secure a successful GRP in contemporary Aotearoa NZ.

- It has always asserted a responsibility to the area and its hapu
- Its ethical coordinates of decision making emphasise sustainable economic activity across space, resource use, and time
- Its vision and practice is grounded firmly in commitments to, and responsibilities for, the marine commons, and the recognition that resource commons are held in trust by multiple publics, past, present and future (from whanau, to hapu, community, iwi, and the nation state)
- The narrative of 'fishing for abundance' has provided a realisable economic ethic for a radically different set of management and productive practices in multiple resource-use ecosystems (e.g. paua, whales, seals)
- Securing its vision has demanded highly strategic politics at a time when national resource economy settings privilege export driven commodity production – it is absolutely contingent on iwi support, and has been based on careful tactical relations with government agencies

The GRPs that this has spawned transcend private property, growth, and the promises of trickle down and out. They do not gift, sell or pimp the commons to private property, but seek to bring capital to the commons in discrete initiatives where relations among value, values and natures can be contested. Blue economy can be understood in these terms as the management of the commons to make livelihoods in contexts where property rights are far from fully privatised (Le Heron et al. 2016).

4.6 Enterprise-driven eco-tourism

Kaikōura enjoys a rich natural resources. Its location on State Highway 1 makes it a must-stop destination for travellers and within the limits of a day trip from a major centre for international tourists. It has majestic mountains inland, vineyards to the north and south, flourishing paua and other shellfish beds on the coast, accessible seal colonies, and the Canyon that attracts whales and dolphins.

'Whale Watch Kaikōura' (WWK), a Māori owned and operated tourism venture based around the sperm whale population that feeds on the edges of the Kaikōura Canyon has taken full advantage to build a regional eco-tourism industry that in 2019 attracted 185,000 overnight visitors. An enterprise driven eco-tourism GRP has been built on the back of WWK, which has in turn derived its resourcefulness from the customary protected areas delivered by Ngai Tahu.

Seen initially as the key to unemployment problems amongst local Māori in a declining region, WWK is now nationally celebrated and globally recognised for responsible tourism. It

is a poster child for efforts to integrate eco-tourism and Māori economy, and national blue economy futures.

Self-regulating and protected by monopoly rights to provide whale watching tours, WWK has turned natural advantage, collective management of the marine commons, close relations with Ngai Tahu and TKoTM, and Māori economy ethics into a marine eco-tourism GRP for Kaikōura.

The Whalewatch website outlines a suite of Te Ao Māori values that enrich the more established five 'Cs' of eco-tourism (customer, company, community, conservation and culture) with ethics that are argued to distinguish Māori business models grounded in environmental stewardship (Rout et al. 2019). On the ground, WWK has been a stabilising and leading presence – working closely with TKoTM and mediating many of the relationships with the outside world associated with international tourism, as well as iwi-community-government-business relations, and those between tourism and the environment.

This Māori-led ecotourism GRP assembled the resourcefulness bound up in TKoTM, the marine commons, and Māori economy ethics and capital into a tourism development trajectory that contributed 65% of all economic growth in the region from 2001 until the earthquake.

4.7 Earthquake infrastructure-led recovery

The earthquake of 2016 destroyed much of Kaikōura's physical infrastructure, brought a rapidly growing tourism to a sudden stop and sorely tested the resilience of its social institutions and community organisations (Cradock-Henry et al. 2018). It undermined the two extant GRPs and their underpinning resourcefulness. The seabed rose by up to five meters in places. Mussel and pua beds were stranded, damaged and closed, as were roads, the wharf and rail lines. Restaurants and shops shut.

In late December 2016, Government established the North Canterbury Transport Infrastructure Recovery organisation (NCTIR) to restore the damaged physical infrastructure between Picton and Christchurch and get the region moving again. A network of contractors and ministry contracts, NCTIR moved swiftly to manage the recovery effort. It was given special authorities and powers to short-circuit resource management protocols, effectively restoring the directive state for a period in from of a private network (Bull and Sweeney 2017).

While several of the decisions and the processes by which they were made are now contested, the recovery effort rebuilt physical infrastructure and strengthened community institutions and economic resourcefulness in a remarkably quick time. Local labour was hired wherever possible and a wage premium and good morale built positive relations with the community. Recovery workers provided demand for retailers and community dynamism. NCTIR built a workers' village and strong working relationships with local businesses, regional government authorities, TKoTM, and Ngai Tahu. Alongside TKoTM and

the KDC it organised local restaurants into a collective to supply meals for workers, offering reliability and choice to workers and securing steady demand for food businesses.

In effect, NCTIR led a recovery based regional development programme, which in turn drew on the community-based resourcefulness that TKoTM had assembled in the region. TKoTM became a more prominent focus for community life, a conduit to external agencies, and a pivotal agency in many recovery initiatives. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, it worked with Ngai Tahu leaders to provide food, shelter and reassurance for local communities. TKoTM mediated in contests over NCTIR's decisions to do with rerouting train tracks and siting new walkways and cycleways. It also liaised between community and the geologists, ecologists and social scientists who arrived to research the earthquake. It connected researchers to local people, places and concerns, ensuring research was co-developed with and translated for local communities. In so doing, TKoTM ensured that research informed perspectives were aligned with its own foundational vision.

4.8 A contested new regional economy

By mid-2019 NCTIR had largely completed its recovery initiatives, leaving Kaikōura with significantly improved physical infrastructure, as well as enhanced social capital and eco-tourism potential. The whales returned and tourist numbers bounced back quickly, but onto new development trajectories underpinned by a reconfigured regional resourcefulness. Kaikōura was now gripped by new ideas, aspirations and external connections.

The earthquake and extensive national interest in the recovery, had given Kaikōura new visibility. It had alerted many more New Zealanders to its vistas and charms, unleashing new value propositions and external connections. Kaikōura had new audiences to address. New elements had been added to its tourism narratives and new characters had appeared in its stories.

At least three competing visions of Kaikōura's future are now in play: an external capital-led volume tourism and amenity migration hub; a community-led, sectorally-diverse, high-value, low-volume, sustainability-focused region; and some uneasy coalition of elements from both. Table 2 characterises these in terms of two emergent GRPs, a community-led ki uta ki tai food economy, and a tourism and amenity economy.

The recovery effort more fully positioned both TKoTM and Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura, the representative organisation of Ngai Tahu in the region as development agencies. As recovery has transformed into a new normal, Kaikōura's various development agencies, including also the Kaikōura District Council (KDC) have developed different value propositions.

TKoTM is working to encourage a future economy that delivers on its foundational vision to serve the community and support the environment. It has led the development of a Charter Fishers Code of Conduct and a place-specific 'Kaikōura Option' to enhance the 'Hector's and Maui's Dolphin Threat Management Plan'. It has also applied for research funding to support a value proposition centred on food (fisheries and land-based produce) and low

impact community eco-educational tourism. The proposition combines elements of the 'community-based resource economy' and 'enterprise driven eco-tourism' GRPs into a *Community-led ki uta ki tai food economy*, one centred on principles of ecological and environmental principles, community economy, and small to medium sized enterprises (see Jackson et al. 2018).

TKoTM is leading local responses to the challenge of reopening local fisheries and has forged strong connections with 'Future Kaikōura', the newly formed local Business Association. TKoTM also continues to work closely with Ngai Tahu, drawing on the Runanga for support for its initiatives. However, there are other visions in play.

Global and local exposure has meant heightened interest from external investors, who are already moving to take advantage of the revamped infrastructure and tourism revival. A new 118 bed hotel will provide a platform for a scaled-up and more fully packaged tourism.

A new real estate economy has begun to develop. Property developers are breaking up rural holdings for sale to domestic and international amenity migrants, while others have invested in the renewal of the central retail and restaurant precinct (Steeman 2018). Global property company Savills is reporting that 'Kaikōura has the potential to rival the South Island's top tourism destinations ... with land values offering excellent value compared with other tourism hot spots' (Gibson 2018). Marketing property is linking growing tourism numbers to claims about housing shortages and zero vacancy rates for commercial space (Savills 2019).

The KDC is committed to this vision. A district council, whose economic development and environmental responsibilities are overseen by the wider Canterbury Regional Council, the KDC faces significant and longstanding financial issues to do with maintaining infrastructure in a small and isolated settlement as well as servicing debts from building new chambers in 2015 (Williams 2020). Rates incomes from property development offer a lifeline for a Council whose financial sustainability is under review by central government (Williams 2020).

The KDC is promoting a high visibility development strategy targeted at a higher volume, internationally connected, partner-driven, and year-round tourism and amenity migration to the region (KDC 2020) – a mix of generic tourism and creative turn sought by many similar regions and so often undermined by ignoring community voice (see Argent et al. 2013). As prefigured by Savills, the infrastructure upgrade and increased visibility created by the earthquake has stimulated a regional value proposition that looks something like 'Kaikōura, the new Queenstown'. While dressed as sustainable tourism development, its underpinning structure of external networks makes it blind to questions of geographic rent.

Steering a path between these two visions, regional tourism organisation 'Destination Kaikōura' advocates a place-specific tourism and an amenity economy that balances locally owned high value tourism development with more substantive tourism infrastructure. While it has strong links to the KDC, it is dominated by tourism operators whose interests lie in generating and capturing rents locally by fostering and protecting the distinctiveness

values of place (Fountain et al. 2019). It advocates a regional development centred on maintaining a careful balance between high-end and high-volume tourism.

Ngai Tahu, meanwhile, has resource-based marine economy development aspirations as well as similar mix of tourism interests. Firmly anchored in a very long-term GRP founded on place and its ecological, spiritual, cultural and livelihood values, its shorter-term strategic interests lie somewhere between the community-centric visions of TKoTM and KDC's strategies, or at least encompass elements of both.

These differing visions were crystallised and pitched into direct competition in Kaikōura's bid for funding under the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) in 2018-19. The first significant regional development funding package since the early 1980s (Connelly et al. 2019), the PGF has revitalised regional economic development imaginaries across New Zealand. The PGF gave Kaikōura's recovery initiatives a new momentum and aspiration as post-earthquake value propositions began to take shape. Three projects were proposed and the KDC applied for funding to undertake a feasibility analysis, which was conducted by an external economic consultant overseen by the Canterbury EDA in Christchurch.

TKoTM assembled the most ambitious proposal, a Marine Centre of Excellence, which aimed to combine research and education facilities with a paua hatchery, an aquarium and sustainable seafood harvesting initiatives. The proposal assembled Māori fisheries enterprises, TKoTM, external education and research providers, established tourism interests, and external capital in the form of an international Aquarium designer and curator. It envisaged a development pathway that stewarded local ecologies, captured rents locally, and ensured intergenerational prosperity and security.

The second proposal involved the extension of the new wharf and related facilities built after the earthquake to service marine tourism, commercial fisheries, and cruise liner visits. Grounded in orthodox resource-based regional development thinking it was linked in turn to more generic tourism development through an aligned redevelopment of the old harbour (Wakatu Quay) area into a commercial, retail and hospitality hub to support the new hotel initiative and the growth of marine mammal tourism. It was supported by established tourism and fisheries interests, including Ngai Tahu who were named as potential investors.

The third project was an upgrade of the airport to support newly envisaged commuting connections, amenity migration, and exclusive tourism.

Ultimately, the consultant's report supported the marina-harbour development, which fitted neatly into a standard economic feasibility framework (KDC 2020). It could be shown to offer jobs and attract investment in expected ways, thus meeting funding criteria set by national economic development agencies. Local and regional authorities adjudged that it would move seamlessly and quickly through the funding process.

In early 2020 the PGF approved \$10 million grants to support the Wakatu Quay development and just under \$1 million for further feasibility work on the new harbour project. Kaikōura's future became reframed within a standard tourism and resource economy development model imposed by standard regional development expertise from

the outside, winning out over collective capabilities, novel visions of resourcefulness, and a creative blue economy GRP.

For TKoTM, however, not all was lost. The marina and harbour are still to some degree community projects and emerged as products of collaborative processes. The PGF proposal troubled gave Kaikōura access to investment capital that would allow the region to shape its own social and economic future. The successful implementation of the project will depend on further community collaboration. TKoTM remains active in negotiating the terms of the Wakatu Quay development.

At the same time, the tourism that is supported by the Wakatu Quay development can still be oriented towards eco-tourism. TKoTM's vision of a distinctive blue economy built on flourishing marine ecologies, enhanced community livelihoods and a reorientation of economy-environment relations to sustainability and resilience is not necessarily antithetical to the funded project. TKoTM's vision lives on in new funding proposals to support eco-tourism initiatives (TKoTM, 2020).

The political alignments fostered through the PGF process are still alive, while the paua hatchery has recently resurfaced as a potential Covid recovery project. Other Covid recovery initiatives directed at international tourism have created new space for TKoTM's imagination. Heralded as the type of enterprise that must be safeguarded, WhaleWatch has received significant recovery funding and is once again seen nationally as inspiration for locally-oriented, eco-tourism regional development.

Ngai Tahu is a formative force within TKoTM and shares its political commitments to local control of development processes and radically new environment-economy relations. In many of its efforts, it acts in relation with TKoTM and the KDC. It exerts influence over both, especially in relation to economic futures. No social vision or action is possible without its input and it is a compulsory port of call for all government agencies and outside capitalists looking to invest.

Ngai Tahu also enacts its own social, cultural and environmental development visions and local activities. This includes interests in fisheries and tourism led blue economy, a new mountains-to-sea food economy, and initiatives in cultural and restorative eco-tourism. As an independent economic agent and a local governance agency alongside others, the iwi has become a prominent regional development agency. Its action and support are always built on commitments to environmental values and intergenerational community outcomes. It is a key assembler of what seems likely to emerge, post-Covid, as a GRP comprised of a mix of elements from different visions.

5 Conclusion

Over the last 25 years Kaikōura has been the subject of a succession of unfolding value propositions and related investment and institutional interventions that have assembled its

resourcefulness into geographic rent platforms. Projects have come and gone, but resourcefulness has been fostered, refined and connected to shifting RVPs.

The story is one of assembling resourcefulness and initiatives across multiple administrative, economic, spatial and social scales. It is of a regional development envisioned, assembled and enacted by diverse actors, each of whom has multiple, and often conflicting, agendas and overlapping constituencies and territorial responsibilities.

Significantly, many of the actors involved have been social collectives that have sought to revitalise the commons and commoning. Māori have been prominent assemblers, as has TKoTM. Their various interventions have featured taking back marine commons lost under alienation processes, entrepreneurial adventures at the heart of global capitalism, and strategic investments in capability building, collective imagining, and political action.

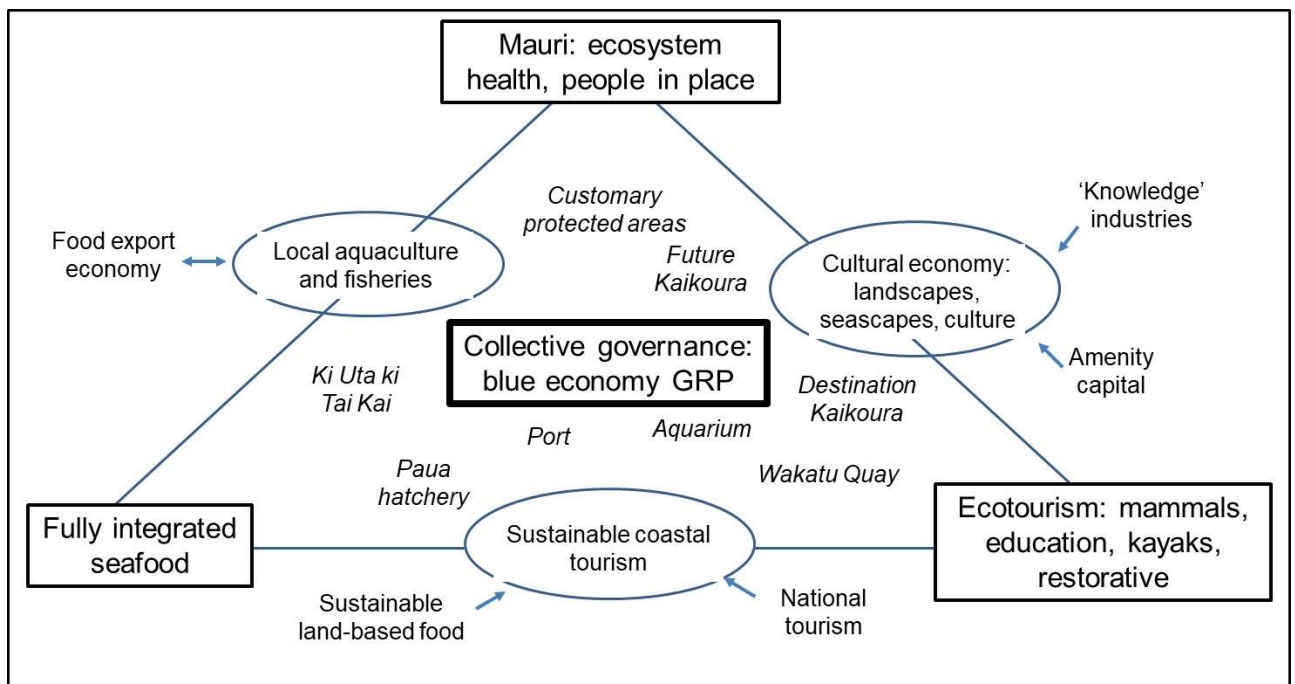
We argue 'doing' regional development in an autonomous local manner in this way is a resilient and successful way to reconceptualise and reorganise regional development.

As Kaikōura looks to a post-Covid recovery, the recent struggle among multiple and tightly entangled actors over competing interpretations of regional resourcefulness, associated value propositions, and tangible projects has strengthened its resourcefulness and resilience. It has strong local governance and is well positioned politically, intellectually and in terms of social capital to imagineer, broker and assemble new regional futures. Regional development, we would argue is in-the-making.

We see a regional blue economy model emerging built on three pillars (Figure 1): Mauri, ecotourism, and integrated and sustainable seafood. These pillars are supported by a series of initiatives and connections to locally structured industry assemblages (cultural economy, aquaculture and fisheries, and coastal tourism) and to external economic assemblages such as the domestic and global seafood and tourism industries. The pillars are being constructed from a set of initiatives launched bottom up by local governance entities and businesses and controlled locally, giving the entire model a community structured integrity.

At the heart of the model lies community governance and an informally understood blue economy GRP. Documented by TKoTM in the value propositions embedded in its mission and vision statements, 20 years of practice that has built resourcefulness (including strong relationships with Ngai Tahu, Kaikōura businesses, national government agencies and local government, and its ongoing launching of initiatives related to its strategies. While not using the language of GRPs, it is clear that TKoTM continues to enact a platform for a community economy that returns its wealth to people in place and its natural environments. This GRP is fundamentally reliant on community governance.

Figure 1: Blue economy geographical rent platform for Kaikōura



5.1 Propositions for regional blue economies in Aotearoa New Zealand

The research highlights lessons for regions beyond the case study of Kaikōura. Our key finding is that place-based regional development centred on experimentation based on a central geographical rent platform is a positive way to reinterpret and re-enact regional development and one that actively grows community commitment and regional resilience. This is a case-driven finding and reinforces the value of locally imagine and enacted futures based on local assessments and crafting of resourcefulness.

Returning to the propositions we presented in the Introduction to this report, we suggest ten propositions for practising regional development based on blue economy.

1. Regional development is *a question of assembling* different entanglements of interests, agencies, value propositions, and diverse resources into geographical rent platform(s) that will materialise resourcefulness and transition diverse collectivities towards just futures.
2. There is significant creative value to be derived from focusing on *what is being assembled, how and by and for whom* in relation to arrangements of resourcefulness, value propositions, and geographical rent.
3. *Te Tiriti* is a unique and extremely valuable regional development asset and source of participatory governance and blue economy momentum – they promise to establish powerful collective geographical rent platforms for New Zealand communities
4. Regional development research and practice must *recognise and embrace the diverse development work performed by a host of actors*

5. 'Doing' regional development with local groups produces a regional development that *can be aligned with economic and national interests* but transcends established state models, policy and practice.
6. *Co-development of value propositions can produce a resilient regional development platform* that reappraises resources, analyses potentialities and pitfalls, and demonstrates impacts for on-going positive change – building on concepts of value propositions, resourcefulness and rent platforms will enable researchers to work with community, business and government development actors
7. *The state remains important* as a more or less coherent set of investment projects, institutions, and stabilising interventions that offer up specific opportunities to enhance regional resourcefulness - state capacities can still be invoked in crisis and do not necessarily displace community actors.
8. Reconceptualising the practice and politics of regional development shifts attention from universal trickle-down policies to *identifying and initiating opportunities to assemble collectively 'owned' projects*
9. *There is significant potential in knowing and performing regional development in non-standard ways, and significant dangers in suppressing creativity through standard measures and templates.*
10. *There is much to gain by exploring projects of commoning* and using these to emphasise the links between ecology and economy in imagining and organising blue economy transitions

5.2 Thinking forward

Covid's influence will place new emphasis on the question of how Kaikōura seeks to enact credible alternative economic futures. Our work in the district suggests that the crucial questions are who decides and who appropriates geographical rents and under what conditions. Our findings suggest that collectively led and developed value propositions can set creative development agendas, which are then contestable. They are sometimes materialised, and sometimes not. For coastal communities in Aotearoa New Zealand, blue economy development platforms, collectively driven and centred ultimately on a resourcefulness derived from the commons, can open opportunities for community futures.

Community led projects of 'commoning' (developing common resources such as infrastructure, ocean environments, provenance, and collective energies, into a collective resourcefulness and shared value propositions, for collective benefits and visions of the futures) offer a potentially transformative platform for blue economy. Commoning is a crucial strategy for contesting the ways in which ocean spaces are being readied as new extractive resource frontiers in many settings. It keeps alive the contest over geographical rents, which are neither profit nor an anomaly – insisting that any just transition must be based on the return of these rents to the communities and ecologies that generate them.

Kaikōura demonstrates the power of collective thought, commitment and action and how geographical rent platforms might be built, but also demonstrates how the knowledge infrastructure that supports business as usual will get in the way. It demonstrates how ecosystem based management can dovetail with economic creativity and how export

earning can co-exist with community projects. Community-led economic resilience in the face of earthquake and now Covid-19 pandemic provides a lesson about the potential of collective thought and action for all communities.

The Kaikōura case also poses a crucial and largely open question for all manner of stakeholders about scale for blue economy led development and regional development more broadly in New Zealand and elsewhere – how can scales of political action and resource organisation be creatively remade to facilitate this kind of development project?

Appendix 1: Project Outputs

<i>Past / future Date</i>	<i>Challenge representative(s)</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Organisation / event / forum</i>	<i>Location</i>
July 10 2019	Lewis, N. and Le Heron, R.	Financing a blue economy regional rent platform in Kaikōura, New Zealand	Institute of Australian Geographers Annual Conference	Hobart Australia
14 July 2018	Lewis, N. and Le Heron, R.	Rent platforms, regional development and the blue economy, presentation.	Joint NZGS/IAG Conference	Auckland
Sept 2017	Lewis, N. and Le Heron, R.	New arts of rent: Mobilising geographical rent for development, presentation to	Royal Geographical Society / Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference	London

Engagement / meetings / hui - Māori and stakeholders					
<i>Past / future Date</i>	<i>Challenge representative(s)</i>	<i>With (i.e., main iwi, stakeholder name)</i>	<i>Description / purpose</i>	<i>Organised by (i.e., Challenge initiated or invited by ?)</i>	<i>Location</i>
April 2019	Lewis, N.	Kaikōura community	Presentation of work on Building Blue Economy value propositions in Kaikōura	Kaikōura community organisation	Kaikōura
April 2019	Hikuroa, D.	Kaikōura community	Presentation of work on Māori blue economy insights for Kaikōura.	Kaikōura community organisation	Kaikōura
March 2020	Lewis, N. Hikuroa, D. and Le Heron, R.	Te Korowai o te Tai Marokura	Presentation of results from project – engagement with ToTM research futures	Sustainable Seas Challenge	Kaikōura

Publications:

Lewis, N. Le Heron, R. Hikuroa, D. and Le Heron, E. 2020 Making new blue economy in Kaikōura: a participatory process approach, Project report, Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge, Wellington.

Lewis, N. Le Heron, R. Hikuroa, D. and Le Heron, E. (in submission) Constructing Regional Geographical Rent Platforms in New Zealand: The Case of Kaikōura.



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