



Resource Community Formation and Change

**A Case Study of
Riverton**

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INTRODUCTION

This paper reports the findings of a case study of Riverton. It is one of a series of three case studies of fishing communities in New Zealand that are part of a project entitled “Resource Community Formation and Change” which has been funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology¹. The other case studies of fishing communities in this series are Moeraki (WP 25) and Havelock (WP 26).

A variety of research methods were used in this case study which primarily focuses on the history of Riverton since the early 1970's. These methods included an analysis of census statistics, a review of published documents about the town and fishing sector, and five days of interviews in Riverton and Invercargill during November 1999.

The research programme provides a stronger conceptual and empirical basis for social assessment and resource planning in New Zealand, especially in rural communities that depend directly on the primary production or processing of natural resources. The findings from the analysis of the three communities in the fishing sector will be added to those from communities based on the forestry, mining, agriculture, energy and tourism sectors, to develop an improved understanding of the processes of community formation and change in these types of communities.

THE FISHING INDUSTRY IN SOUTHLAND AND FIORDLAND

Over the last twenty years the fishing industry in New Zealand has grown from a coastal fishery into a major export earning sector with a deep sea orientation, and a substantial production of shellfish and rock lobster². The sector focuses on the harvesting and marketing of fresh seafood rather than on processed products. About 85 percent of production is exported. The 1990's has been a period when the sector's harvesting capacity has begun to threaten the industry's survival. New Zealand fisheries are in danger of being fished beyond their sustainability levels. All of them are vulnerable to natural events such as the toxic algal bloom that severely affected the mussel industry in 1993 and 1994, and the earlier collapses of the rock lobster and orange roughy fisheries (Le Heron, 1996: 154).

The main species of fish harvested by vessels off the Southland and Fiordland coasts are blue cod, rock lobster (crayfish) and paua; with the latter two species being the most economically significant. The fishing ports in the region are Waikawa, Bluff, Riverton, Stewart Island, and Milford Sound, while there are major processing facilities at Bluff.

The commercial blue cod fishery in the Southland Fisheries Management Area supports about a hundred vessels from Bluff, Riverton and Stewart Island, and landings have grown to 1,500 tonnes during recent years (Warren *et al.*, 1997: 1). Blue cod was the main species harvested in Fiordland and Southland until the end of the 1940's. They were caught on handlines from tender dories (Guardians of Fiordland's Fisheries, 1999: 19). In the 1930's annual landings of blue cod were of the order of a thousand tonnes. During the second world war they plummeted to below 200 tonnes, but afterwards they returned to pre-war levels, reaching their peak between 1946 and 1952 when frozen fish were exported to Australia. After the rock lobster fishery developed many fishers³ switched their efforts to this more profitable activity. With a change

¹ Contract TBA 801. For further information on the research project contact Taylor Baines & Associates (PO Box 8620, Christchurch or by email: n_taylor@tba.co.nz).

² For a comprehensive review of the development of the fishing industry in New Zealand see Baines (1999).

³ The gender neutral terms ‘fishers’ and ‘fisher’ are used in this paper to refer to people who harvest fish, even though few women work on vessels operating out of Riverton.

from hand-lining to pots in the 1980's, however, interest in harvesting blue cod revived, and annual landings are now back to levels that were attained before and after the second world war (Warren *et al.*, 1997: 11).

This increased activity in the blue cod fishery since 1986 has occurred because of (1) an increase in blue cod quota; (2) easier entry to the fishery since the quota management system was introduced; (3) fishers need to catch their quota to pay levies; (4) a trend to sell or lease unfished quota to more active fishers; and (5) poor rock lobster seasons. Between 96 and 172 vessels harvested blue cod in Southland between the 1989/90 and 1993/94 seasons. Most vessels since the 1989/90 season have fished for less than 120 days annually, and they have contributed about half the total number of days fished. Blue cod are mainly sold on the domestic market as their supply is erratic, they are unable to be exported whole because of the unpleasant nature of their gut content, and the colour 'blue' associated with food does not attract consumers in Asia (Warren *et al.*, 1997: 11-12, 21).

Rock lobsters fetched low prices, and were consumed locally before the late 1940's. At that time a market opened up in the United States for frozen lobster tails. This new market opportunity stimulated the development of the rock lobster fishery in Fiordland. Fishers began to harvest lobster using hoops and pots, but they soon had to refine this technology to overcome the difficulties of fishing in such rough waters. There was a boom period during the 1950's when vessels came to the fishery from Nelson, Westport, Greymouth, Lyttelton, Akaroa, Port Chalmers and Moeraki, as well as from local fishing ports. The total landings of rock lobster from the fishery reached a peak of over 4,000 tonnes in 1956. Thereafter the volume of landings declined as the stocks of inshore rock lobster were depleted. Between 1979 and 1997, for instance, the annual landings of rock lobster from the Fiordland fishery fell from 1,034 to 568 tonnes. Furthermore, over the last fifteen years the number of licensed vessels operating in the fishery has more than halved from 160 to 70. By 1988 a live export lobster fishery had superseded the former practice of "tailing at sea" however. This new live fishery, that is based on markets in Asia, has almost entirely replaced the export of frozen lobster tails to North America (Guardians of Fiordland's Fisheries, 1999: 20-21, 47).

Paua are harvested by diving. When the paua fishery was developed after the second world war it was centred on paua shells which were used for manufacturing jewellery and souvenirs, and the meat was often discarded because of its low value until the early 1960's. Domestic demand for the meat increased during the 1960's, and the government allowed it to be exported in cans. The harvesting of paua expanded rapidly as demand grew, and by the 1970's there was considerable pressure on the resource. The government imposed export restrictions in 1973 to control the harvest. It liberalised restrictions on the export of shell in 1983, meat and shell in 1986, and permitted live paua to be exported in 1990. The main areas harvested for paua in Fiordland include the seaward ends of Caswell Sound, Doubtful Sound, Dagg Sound, Dusky Sound and Preservation Inlet; Five Fingers Peninsula; and Port Craig. During the 1990/91 year 20 per cent of the total catch for the southern paua fishery (PAU 5) was harvested from Fiordland, 28 per cent from the north-west coast of Stewart Island and the south-west coast of the South Island, and 20 per cent from the north-east coast of Stewart Island (Elvy *et al.*, 1997: 13, 14-15).

Other species harvested offshore from Southland and Fiordland include oysters, shark, tuna, groper, and bluenose, while there has been some exploratory fishing for scallops, kina (sea urchin) and sea cucumber (Guardians of Fiordland's Fisheries, 1999: 22).

Murihiku Fishing, a subsidiary of Ngai Tahu Holdings Limited, is a major operator in the fisheries around the Southland coast. The company owns a factory at the old Ocean Beach freezing works at Bluff which processes rock lobster, blue cod and oysters. It also leases quota from the Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission, and subleases it to both Maori and Pakeha.

RIVERTON AND ITS DEPENDENCE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Riverton, a town in Southland, is 37 kilometres west of Invercargill on provincial highway 99. It is a service centre for the fishing industry and farming community. People reside in the district for a variety of reasons. Many respondents in a recent survey of 537 residents, for instance, describe the district as quiet and peaceful, where there are friendly people. For other respondents the coastal environment, the mountain views and proximity to the bush were important factors, while some valued Riverton as a place to raise children, to be close to family and friends, and for employment and business opportunities (Southland District Council, 1997: 18). The district attracts thousands of visitors annually, particularly during the summer. Visitors are attracted by the district's natural beauty, scenic walks, beaches, historic links and recreational activities such as boating, fishing, surfing and horse racing (Southland District Council, 1993: 3).

About ten kilometres to the west of Riverton is Colac Bay. The township at Colac Bay is known as Oraka. Although there are a number of dwellings occupied by permanent residents at Colac Bay, the area has many cribs which are occupied at weekends or holiday times. Some of the permanent residents are fishers (MacIntosh, 1980: 179).

Riverton was founded as a base for the catching and processing of seals and whales. Captain John Howell established a shore whaling station at Jacob's River, as Riverton was called then, in 1834. Within ten years the settlement at Jacob's River had a population of fifty Europeans, Maori and "half-castes", and whaling was no longer the sole means of livelihood as Howell had imported horses and cattle from Sydney for his property (Miller, 1975: 9, 12-13).

With a good harbour and the development of the agricultural and sawmilling industries Riverton grew rapidly between 1850 and 1880. When gold was discovered in Otago during the early 1860's, and later at Orepuki and Roundhill in western Southland (Hall-Jones, 1982: 35-48), some settlers hurried off to the diggings, while others stayed home and built up a large trade with the goldfields. Supplies were imported through the port, and some of the wealth generated from the goldfields contributed to the prosperity of Riverton. When the gold rushes were over, the town became the business and social centre for the runholders of the Waiau and Aparima valleys (Miller, 1975: 24).

During the 1880's sawmills were established in the district at Roundhill, Colac Bay and Wakapatu as areas of native forest were purchased or leased by interests that had awaited the opening of the railway line from Invercargill⁴ (MacIntosh, 1980: 47). Flax was another indigenous resource that was quickly exploited. There was a flaxmill at Otaitai Bush from the 19th century until December 1971, when it employed 18 men and was producing up to \$65,000 worth of hemp annually, while another mill operated at Colac Bay during the first few years of the 20th century (Pankhurst, 1985: 195-196; MacIntosh, 1980: 47). Dairying has also been an important industry in the district around Riverton but; as in other areas of Southland, all of the small factories established to process milk from local farms have been closed (Pankhurst, 1985: 193-196).

Early settlers in the district caught fish for their immediate needs and for sale to people at the mining settlements of Roundhill and Orepuki. By the 1890's there was a fleet of fishing vessels and packing sheds at Colac Bay. A local firm shipped large quantities of fish to Bluff where it was exported to Melbourne. In the early 1900's the fishers of Colac Bay began making longer journeys to the fishing grounds of the West Coast. They also sold fresh fish and smoked cod to the picnic crowds who came to Colac Beach. Some 32 boats powered by oars and/or sails were fishing from Colac Bay between 1896 and 1913. A oil launch was

⁴ The Marakewa to Riverton section of the railway line was opened on 9 June 1879, the Riverton-Colac Bay section on 25 July 1881, and the Colac-Roundhill section on 24 September 1883. This line did not eventually reach Tuatapere until 1 October 1903 (MacIntosh, 1980: 43).

added to the fleet in 1910, and two motor boats in 1916. Thereafter commercial fishing from Colac Bay “seemed to wane” (MacIntosh, 1980: 41-42).

By 1862 the ship owners of Riverton had several vessels of over a hundred tons, but the harbour was reduced to a small fishing port by the end of the 19th century as it had lost its trade to Bluff. Little was recorded of the development of the fishing industry at Riverton until the late 1940's. Before then it was a part-time occupation for most fishers. They primarily used hand lines to catch blue cod and groper for sale to the public and retail shops (Logie, 1980: 8, 17).

The people of Riverton depended on the fishing, agricultural and meat processing industries for their livelihood between 1950 and 1970. The fishing fleet continued to grow, and many part-time fishers were also employed as seasonal workers on farms or at nearby freezing works. After the discovery of abundant supplies of rock lobster of the Fiordland coast, the fishing fleet at the port experienced a boom period until 1980, when declining catches of rock lobster and paua forced many operators either to leave the industry or to move to other ports.

DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Demographic characteristics

Riverton’s population increased by 24 per cent over the 15 years from 1981. This growth occurred after the end of the rock lobster and paua booms when the town’s population rose from 1,470 in 1981 to 1,845 in 1991 (see Table 1). Since then the population of Riverton has stabilised, with 1,830 residents being recorded at the 1996 census.

Table 1: Riverton - changes in the usually resident population 1976-1996

Census Year	Riverton		New Zealand	
	No. of Persons	% change in pop	No. of Persons	% change in pop
1976	1,537	-	3,098,900	-
1981	1,470	-4.4	3,143,307	1.4
1986	1,608	9.4	3,263,283	3.8
1991	1,845	14.7	3,373,929	3.4
1996	1,830	-0.8	3,618,302	7.2

Note: The population data up to 1986 are for the town of Riverton, while for 1991 and 1996 they are the sum of the Riverton East and Riverton West area units.

Source: New Zealand Census 1976-1996

Almost half of Riverton’s residents in 1996 (see Table 2) reported that they were living in the town five years before, and another 37 per cent had moved to the town from other parts of Southland.

Table 2: *Place of residence of Usually Resident Population of Riverton - five years before 1996*

Place of residence	Riverton
	Per cent of Population
Same usual address	48.0
Same territorial authority	25.9
Same regional council, different territorial authority	11.4
Different regional council, same Island	6.0
Different regional council, different Island	2.8
Not specified - New Zealand	4.1
Overseas	1.9
Total number of Persons	1,701

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

The age-sex structure of Riverton's population in 1996 (see Table 3) was markedly different from the national population. The town had a high dependency ratio (0.66 cf. 0.53 for NZ) with relatively more residents aged 65 years and over compared with the country as a whole. Moreover, the imbalance between males and females in the town's population (a M/F sex ratio of 1.02 cf. 0.97) was more pronounced than the national pattern.

Table 3: *Age-sex structure of the population of Riverton 1996*

Age Groups	Riverton		New Zealand	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
% 0 - 14 years	21.4	22.6	24.1	22.0
% 15 - 64 years	61.4	58.9	65.7	65.0
% 65 years & over	17.2	18.6	10.3	13.1
Total Number of Persons	924	903	1,777,464	1,840,839

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

Social characteristics

Census statistics also reveal significant social characteristics of the population of Riverton. Over two-fifths of the families (42 per cent cf. 37 per cent for NZ) resident in the town in 1996 were of the couple only type (see Table 4), and 56 per cent of residents aged 15 years and over (cf. 32 per cent for NZ) held no educational qualifications (see Table 5). The high proportion of residents without educational qualifications, together with other data relating to household incomes and income support that are examined later in this paper, indicate that the town's residents are relatively disadvantaged when compared with the national population.

Table 4: *Family Types in Riverton 1996*

Family Type	% of families	
	Riverton	New Zealand
One parent family	18.2	17.7
Two parent family	39.6	44.9
Couple only	42.1	37.3
Total number of families	477	949,497

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

Table 5: *Highest educational qualifications held by the residents of Riverton - 1996*

Highest educational Qualification	% of residents	
	Riverton	New Zealand
University & other tertiary	14.6	25.8
Secondary	18.6	26.5
No qualifications	55.7	32.2

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

INDUSTRY, WORK AND OCCUPATIONS

Profile of the fishing industry at Riverton circa 1980

There had been a boom in the fishing industry in the region during the 1970's with the discovery of rich supplies of crayfish off the Fiordland coast. Most vessels based at Riverton were fishing for rock lobster which had risen in price from 2/3 per pound (22 cents) in 1948 to \$55 per kilo in 1985. By that year there were 22 species landed at the port including blue cod, octopus, shark and paua (Pankhurst, 1985: 193).

Logie (1980) provides a comprehensive description of the fishing industry in Riverton some twenty years ago. There were 80 registered vessels (all privately owned) domiciled at the port in June 1980, and 62 of them held permits for catching rock lobster. Another 10 registered fishing boats were based at Colac Bay, Cosy Nook and Te Wae Wae Bay. The main fishing methods used by the vessels domiciled at Riverton were lobster potting, cod potting, hand gathering, lines, trawling and set nets. Fish to the value of \$1.2 million (540 tonnes) were landed at the port in 1978, and the composition of those landings by volume and value are presented in Table 6 below.

Logie (1980: 50-51) notes that some 160 men were employed on fishing boats operating from Riverton in 1980. Most owner-skippers of these boats were aged between 35 and 50 years, while their crews ranged from youths just out of school to 30 year old men. Logie classifies the owners into three categories: full-time, seasonal and transient fishers. The full-time fishers operated from larger vessels and were earning net incomes between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per annum. Most seasonal fishers, on the other hand, were employed at one of the local freezing works from December to June and supplemented their wages from that source with net incomes from fishing of around \$5,000 per annum. There were also a number of transient fishers based in Riverton, who were attracted from other fishing ports in the South Island, such as Picton and Dunedin, by the lucrative returns of the region's fisheries during the rock lobster and paua booms⁵.

Table 6: *Volume and Value of Fish Landed at Riverton in 1978*

	Volume (kgs)	Value (\$)
Rock Lobster	250,210	983,325
Wet Fish	262,292	192,626
Shellfish	37,414	24,908

Source: Logie 1980: 37, 48-49.

A factory, operated by the Riverton Fishermen's Cooperative Limited, processed wet fish valued at \$136,904 and rock lobster valued at \$721,134 during the year ended March 1978. The rock lobster catch in 1980 was supplied by 30 of the vessels based at the port, and the wet fish was landed by 20 of those boats when they

⁵ The boom in the rock lobster fishery ended in the late 1970's, whereas the boom in the paua fishery concluded around 1985.

harvested other species. Moreover, Johnson and de Ryk Ltd, provided a freezer depot for another 18 vessels from Riverton that were landing their catch of rock lobster for processing at the company's factory at Bluff (Logie, 1980: 55-56, 63).

Changes in the fishing fleet at Riverton

Only a handful of vessels operated commercially out of Riverton in 1950, but the rock lobster boom and the revival of the blue cod fishery, led to a dramatic growth in the number of boats registered at the port during the 1970's. Official statistics record that there were 118 vessels registered there at the end of that decade (see Table 7 below). By 1997, however, the number of boats was more than halved to 50 as the stocks of rock lobster and paua dwindled, and small operators withdrew from the industry.

Table 7: Registered fishing vessels at Riverton⁶

Year	Number of fishing vessels
1976	114
1980	118
1984	75
1997	50

Source: Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries. The data for 1976 to 1984 were cited in Boyce *et al.* 1986:33, and the data for 1997 were cited in Baines 1999: 23.

Fishing methods and changes in catch technologies

Fishers employ a range of methods and technologies that differ according to the species of their catch.

Fishing trips around the south-west coast of the South Island in the early decades of the 20th century became longer as technological changes increased safety and ensured that catches could be returned to port some weeks later. These changes included the replacement of sail and steam by benzene and diesel powered engines, and the use of freezers to preserve the catch. Over the closing decades of the 20th century echo sounders, fish finders, and geographical position systems (GPS) have become standard pieces of equipment on almost all fishing boats. Fishers use GPS to focus their effort more efficiently by identifying 'hot spots', but this technology may contribute to the depletion of fish stocks in some localities (Guardians of Fiordland's Fisheries, 1999: 19, 26). Furthermore, mechanical power has been replaced by hydraulic power on modern vessels, and this has reduced the maintenance costs for operators.

Before the 1980's blue cod were usually caught by handlines. Since then they have been harvested by specially designed cod pots. Pots are more efficient than lines for catching blue cod. They require less labour, the work is easier, and they are lifted at regular time intervals. Lines had to be secured all the time when boats were fishing for cod. Although the catching technology has changed, a typical vessel is still crewed by two or three men.

Cod potting is a labour intensive activity, and on average a fisher uses seven pots per trip. The pots are set by day and baited with squid and paua intestines. They are generally lifted between four and twelve times per day; with the number of lifts varying with the tide, catch rates, and the number of pots in the water. Experienced fishers move their pots to another site after a day or two of fishing. They process blue cod on board the boat as the catch earns higher returns when gilled and gutted for markets in Asia (Guardians of

⁶ Official statistics regarding the port of registration of fishing vessels are only indicative of changes in the size of the fleet operating from Riverton, as boats registered at other ports may land their catch or base their operations there. Likewise, vessels that have Riverton as their port of registration may also base their fishing activities at other ports in the region.

Fiordland's Fisheries, 1999: 58-59). Most blue cod fishers only make day trips and confine their activities to a comfortable distance from their base. However, some fishers from Riverton and Bluff are making longer trips of four days or more as the depletion of blue cod stocks around these ports has forced them to travel to the Fiordland coast where blue cod are more abundant (Warren *et al.*, 1997: 16).

The blue cod fishery is seasonal with the amount of effort decreasing when rock lobster are caught between September and January. Many blue cod fishers also harvest rock lobster, and weather conditions over winter and spring months are generally unsettled and reduce the number of days suitable for fishing. The largest blue cod catches usually occur between March and August (Warren *et al.*, 1997: 12).

Other species of wet fish are harvested by methods such as trawling and set netting. A Riverton fisher, we interviewed, uses set nets to catch shark and rig at various places around Stewart Island and off the coast of Fiordland. He places the nets at a specific location on the sea bottom, and checks them every 12 hours.

Fishers, who mainly catch rock lobster, typically spend the April to June period refitting their boats. The season does not really begin until June and July when the rock lobster can be sent to overseas markets before their competitors in West Australia begin harvesting. So many fishers try to catch much of their quota before then, even though the supply of rock lobster around the southern coast in June and July is very limited.

Fishers began harvesting rock lobster using wooden frame pots, but soon had to refine the technology to overcome the difficulties of fishing in such rough waters. Significant innovations included the use of steel pots, plastic buoys and synthetic ropes which freed up deck space and allowed more pots to be set. The size of the steel pots varies according to the size and capability of the vessel. Vessels generally have between 150 and 250 pots each, and productive pots are lifted once every 24 hours. Fishers may delay lifting their pots for longer periods should the weather be bad, or yields be poor (Guardians of Fiordland's Fisheries, 1999: 20, 45-46). While the size of these steel pots has remained the same, their weight has increased considerably over recent years as heavier pots are less likely to be lost in the rough seas. These heavier pots cost about \$220 ex factory, or up to \$300 with ropes and floats attached, and a set of 200 of them represents a capital investment of \$60,000 for an operator.

Practical experience is also necessary for catching rock lobster. A fisher must know how, where, and when, the pots should be put on the sea bottom. He must learn how to read the tide and current patterns, and know the time of year they should be placed there. Immature rock lobster migrate in clusters around the Fiordland and Southland coasts. When fishers strike such a migration, they keep resetting their pots across its path until the cluster passes the locality.

The paua fishery is harvested by divers, but they are not permitted to use underwater breathing apparatus. The divers use a trowel to dislodge the paua from the substrate into hand-held nets. These nets are either suspended from floating inner-tubes or deposited in a small tender that is near the diver. There is no recognised season for paua, and they are harvested as weather and sea conditions allow (Elvy *et al.*, 1997: 13). Recent innovations that have facilitated the harvesting of paua have been the use of holding pots and wet wells in the boats to keep the paua alive until they are landed (Guardians of Fiordland's Fisheries, 1999: 22).

Periods of bad weather limit fishing operations in Foveaux Strait, and around the south-west coast of the South Island. Fishers recognise that a sudden change in the weather may be very hazardous in this stretch of water. Thus they may be forced to suspend their fishing activities and run for shelter. Those who harvest rock lobsters in the shelter of the sounds of Fiordland, however, may continue their operations even though conditions are very rough in the Tasman Sea.

Processing Facilities at Riverton

Fiordland Lobster Limited established a processing factory at Te Anau in the late 1980's. Rock lobster are landed at the company's receiving depot at Riverton then trucked to Te Anau. At Te Anau the rock lobster are processed, packed and graded at the factory for live export in extremely low water temperatures.

The Riverton Fishermen's Company Limited was founded as a cooperative in 1972. In those days fishers tailed their rock lobster at sea. The tails were landed at the factory, and then packed into 10 kilogram cartons for export to the United States. This process required a staff of four or five people. Since the late 1980's, as has already been noted, live rock lobster exports to Japan and Asia have largely replaced the export of frozen tail exports. Some lower value grade or damaged rock lobster - with feelers and legs missing - are either tailed or cryogenically frozen for export to Asia, Europe and the United States. Now only one or two staff are employed in the receiving, weighing and grading of live rock lobster, which are normally swum overnight and trucked to Live Lobsters Southland Limited in Bluff for export consignment. One staff member will receive and weigh the fish off the boat normally in the evening. The following day a staff member grades the fish for transfer by the factory's truck to Bluff (Logie, 1999).

In June 1996 the Riverton Fishermen's Company Limited had 14 employees servicing 40 vessels fishing out of Riverton and using the company's facilities. The fishing grounds of these vessels extend from Centre Island, around Stewart Island and as far north as Jacksons Bay and Milford Sound on the West Coast. The company exports rock lobster in 'cold life' packaging by air to Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan, while other fish species such as blue cod, groper and flat fish are exported to France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United States. There is also a market for shark in Australia for the fish and chip trade. In addition to the Southland and Otago wholesale catering and hospitality trade the retail shop is also popular with customers coming as far afield as Central Otago to ensure they can purchase good quality fresh fish (The Western Star, June 1996).

Two firms based in Riverton use the shells of paua that are harvested by local fishing boats. Southern Paua and Pacific Shells makes souvenirs and jewellery from the shells, and exports them to Germany, Denmark, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom (The Western Star, March 1997). Fiordland Souvenirs Limited, on the other hand, transforms the shells into jewellery for sale to tourists.

The effects of the quota management system and regulatory costs on the industry

Before the 1980's the state had an interventionist role in the fishing industry⁷. There was a licensing system in the 1950's, which was first replaced by permits in the 1960's, and later by quotas, incentives and tax breaks during the 1970's (Le Heron, 1996: 154).

The quota management system (QMS) was established by the 1983 Fisheries Act. It was designed to facilitate the operation of market forces to allow quotas to be traded between fishing operators (Nightingale, 1992: 224). The QMS controls activities in New Zealand's fisheries by imposing catch limits, and regulating the methods, areas and timing of those activities. Every year the Ministry of Fisheries assesses the total allowable commercial catch (TACC) for a species, and allocates the TACC in the form of individual transferable quota (ITQ) to fishing operators. The ITQ is a tradeable property right that permits operators to harvest a quantity of a particular species within an area designated by the Crown (Le Heron, 1996: 155).

Although the QMS has allowed fish stocks around the southern coast of the South Island to be harvested on an sustainable basis, it has had a number of significant effects on other aspects of the operations of the industry. The QMS has capped the amount a fisher is permitted to catch unless he can lease or buy more.

⁷

For a fuller discussion of the role of government in the fishing sector over the latter half of the 20th century see Baines (1999: 14-16).

It has allowed fishers to plan better, and has added more certainty to their operations. There has been a lot of trading of ITQ in the region. The downside is that older fishers have sold out. Their quota has been purchased or leased out by processing companies who in turn have subleased it to other fishers who agree to supply the quota, and any other quota they own, to the processing companies. A local government officer, we interviewed, considered that the prices of quota may be “*artificially high*”, whereas the skipper of a vessel based in Riverton maintained that quota is becoming more and more concentrated in the hands of companies and “*Queen Street businessmen*” who are pushing up prices. There are a lesser number of younger men entering the industry. They must lease quota, and this means they have lower margins on the fish they sell. Thus these younger fishers take a long period of time to build up sufficient funds to purchase quota.

Fishers who either live, base their vessels, or land their catch from the southern rock lobster fishery at Riverton held 170 tonnes of quota in November 1999. About half of this quota was leased from owners of ITQ (Ministry of Fisheries, 1999 & Logie, 1999). This separation of ownership and harvest rights has become particularly evident in the case of the rock lobster fisheries:

“With few exceptions the catching sector in many regions is becoming increasingly either fully or partially lease dependent.There is a danger that quota owners, especially those who fall into the classification of absentee landlords, will be so focused on their return of capital in the form of lease fees that they lose sight of what is happening to the resource that is the foundation of their equity. Equally, the potential value of commercial access to rock lobster cannot be realised if lease dependent and contract harvest fishermen retain the cultural barriers between themselves and the apparently uncaring quota owners, or if fishermen waste time indulging themselves in lingering memories of the halcyon days when the owner operator fisherman was the master of all he or she surveyed.” (Sykes, 1999: 8)

These comments by a spokesman for the Rock Lobster Industry Council highlight the cultural barriers between owners and leaseholders of quota, and the effects of the QMS on the sustainability of the rock lobster fisheries.

Riverton had a lot of seasonal fishers catching rock lobster during the boom years. The costs of quota management fees to Ministry of Fisheries, payments for leased quota and registration fees, have made this activity unattractive to part-time and seasonal fishers, and many of them have left the industry. The introduction of the quota system has also reduced the number of Ngai Tahu fishers participating in the commercial fishing sector in Southland. Some of those men who left the industry were partially literate and frustrated by the record keeping required by the QMS. Yet, according to one of our informants, they were “*instinctive fishermen*” and “*the best conservators*”, with a comprehensive knowledge of their fishing territory. This informant favourably compared their fishing practices with the attitude of some fishers currently operating in the blue cod fishery who “*clean out the territory*” by using technological aids to locate ‘hot spots’ they have seen someone else fishing the previous day.

Regulatory costs have increased over the past few years. Not only are fishers liable to the cost recovery levies of the Ministry of Fisheries, but they must also pay fees (e.g. radio licences and safety inspections) to other government agencies. Holders of quota for the southern rock lobster fishery (CRA8), for instance, must pay a monthly levy of \$53.85 per tonne of quota, a permit holder’s levy of \$49.26 per month, and a fisheries services levy of \$43.57 per month to the Ministry of Fisheries during the 1999/2000 year⁸ (Logie, 1999).

⁸

All the levies cited here are GST exclusive.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL ECONOMIES

The regional economy

The people of Western Southland are highly dependent on natural resources for their economic welfare. The region has experienced major impacts from changes in government policy and commodity prices over the past fifteen years which have been reflected in changing patterns of land use. There has been a shift from pastoral farming, based on sheep and cattle, to dairy production. Employment in the coal mining industry at Ohai and Nightcaps has remained low since the restructuring of the state sector in 1987. While the opening of more processing plants and the increased planting of exotic forests (often on land formerly used for pastoral farming) has expanded employment in the forest industry (Houghton *et al.*, 1996: 3).

In the rural district around Riverton there are rented farm houses, lifestyle blocks, and farms. A local resident noted that about two-thirds of the farms are dairy units as that form of agricultural production has increased in the district over the last five years. There have been more than a hundred conversions of sheep to dairy units in Southland during that period. The dairy industry has provided more employment both on farm and off farm in the service sector. Dairy farmers from the North Island, who have purchased farms in the region, invest large sums of capital (e.g. \$1.5 million per unit) and have high levels of debt.

Forestry production is expected to “take-off” in the region over the next five years because of the maturation of the exotic forests. The radiata pine grown in Southland is of a lighter colour than that produced elsewhere in New Zealand. This feature makes it attractive in overseas markets for decorative wood products. Brightwood, a company based in the United States, has a plant at Otautau. It manufactures building products such as window frames. They are exported to markets in the United States and Asia. The company employs about a hundred people; some of whom commute from Riverton. Additional employment has also been generated in firms that provide services to Brightwood.

Fishing has been a significant economic activity in the region for many decades. The industry’s contribution to the economy has varied with the fluctuations in the fish stocks around the coasts. Booms in particular fisheries (e.g. rock lobster) have attracted newcomers to the region and generated strong economic growth in some localities, while the depletion and restrictions on the harvesting of particular species (e.g. oysters) has put financial pressure on individual operators.

The tourism industry also makes a significant contribution to the regional economy. In some parts of the region, such as Stewart Island, Deep Cove, and Milford Sound, the recent growth in tourism ventures has put pressure on wharf space that was previously used by people from the fishing industry. A local government officer estimates that about half of the fishing boats based at Stewart Island have some involvement in tourism ventures. There is a commercial fisher from Riverton who takes tourists deep sea fishing.

Environmental impacts

The fishing industry has a number of environmental effects on the fisheries around the Southland and Fiordland coasts, and the port of Riverton. Several of these effects were described to us by local residents. It was contended that some species (i.e. hoki and orange roughy) are being “*fished out*”, and there are no reserves along the coastline that would allow shellfish to spawn. Fish remains are sometimes washed up on the shore, while damaged fishing gear in the vicinity of the wharfs at Riverton is visually unattractive. Furthermore, some people who reside by the port are disturbed by the noise emanating from fishing vessels. There are also positive environmental effects from the industry for the residents of Riverton. Fish waste from the factory of the Riverton Fishermen’s Ltd is used for garden fertiliser. People also take advantage of the port’s facilities for recreational activities; with the jetties providing platforms for fishing by 10 to 15 year old boys, and the ‘T’ wharf supplying “*a jump-off point*” for swimmers.

The local economy of Riverton

A profile of the business firms currently operating in Riverton is presented in Table 8. The range of trades and services provided by local firms is limited due to the town's proximity to Invercargill. Twenty eight of the firms (58 per cent) are retailers or operate in the hospitality sector. The National Bank in the town has no ATM, and Trust Bank closed its branch about three years ago. Two restaurants, one in the town itself and the other at the beach, attract patrons from as far afield as Invercargill. Four hotels, a guest house, and a motel and camping ground at the beach also provide hospitality. The town has a supermarket, a butchery, several takeaway shops and dairies, a pharmacy, a drapery, and specialist shops selling souvenirs, art works, handicrafts, hunting equipment and equestrian gear. A local food retailer noted the recent trend for Riverton people to shop in Invercargill as they now have better vehicles for transport, and there is a greater variety of goods in that city.

Table 8: *Business firms operating in Riverton - 1999*

Category	Number of Firms
Food retailers, restaurants, cafes	9
Other retail shops	11
Accommodation / liquor	8
Professional & business services	2
Banks	1
Service stations & motor vehicle repairs	3
Transport services	2
Builders	3
General contractors	1
Bricklayers	2
General & marine engineering	1
Fish processors & exporters	2
Souvenir & jewellery manufacturers	2
Veterinary services	1
TOTAL	48

Source: UBD, 1999: T613-615

Five firms (i.e. general and marine engineers; fish processors and exporters; and souvenir and jewellery manufacturers) have direct links with the fishing vessels operating out of the port. Four of these firms were discussed in an earlier section of the paper entitled "Processing Facilities at Riverton". During the boom in the rock lobster fishery the engineering firm derived 80 per cent of its turnover from the fishing sector. It employed six men. They manufactured lobster pots, repaired equipment on the boats, and prepared vessels for their surveys. The firm changed its emphasis to servicing the agricultural sector after the rock lobster boom was over. It manufactured farm sheds, and there were eight men working full-time with the firm in the mid 1980's prior to the rural downturn. Nowadays, the firm has three full-time workers; with 40 per cent of its turnover generated from the fishing industry, and 60 per cent from the agricultural sector and other sources.

The declining number of boats working out of Riverton also affected the turnover of food retailers and other local firms that had less direct links with the industry. The rock lobster and paua booms between 1970 and 1985 were prosperous years for the town's business sector. Fishers built expensive houses in the town in the 1970's, and furnished them well. It was not uncommon for fishers at this time to take large quantities of meat,

groceries, and beer with them on their trips, and they were sometimes away for a month at a time. They also made generous donations to community organisations, purchased expensive cars and got involved with horse racing. There was a paua rush in the 1980's before the quota system was introduced. Thus there was another boom period until the paua were "*cleaned out*". Several fishers and their families moved out of Riverton after these booms and went to Australia to continue fishing. Some of them were from families with a long association with the town.

Riverton's location provides business people with an excellent opportunity to take advantage of the growing number of domestic and international visitors to Fiordland who pass through the district. Over 2,000 people stayed at least one night in the district between September 1997 and March 1998, and between them spent \$60,000 in the town (The Western Star, May 1998). One tourism entrepreneur, based in Queenstown, operates the Riverton Rocks Guest House, a backpackers hostel at the Globe Hotel, and Kiwi Wilderness Walks to cater for tourists attracted by the scenic beauty of the region. Kiwi Wilderness Walks operates a four day trip on the Waitutu Track, and a five day tour to Stewart Island for parties of three to twelve people. Furthermore, events such as the Riverton Carnival and the Festival of the Horse attract hundreds of visitors from Invercargill and other parts of Southland during the summer.

Local community leaders and the Southland District Council (SDC) have tried to enhance Riverton's image as a tourism destination for both domestic and foreign visitors through a series of projects which were initiated by a concept plan developed seven years ago (Southland District Council, 1993). The responsibility for implementing the projects rests with a committee of community representatives. The projects have focussed on events that will attract visitors and improve the district's amenities⁹. The Wallace Early Settlers Museum is being upgraded and an arts centre is being established.

Employment and occupational status

A large number of residents were employed in activities beyond the boundaries of the town in 1996 (see Table 9). Although the town had 687 residents in the labour force, only 396 persons reported that they actually worked there. The main sources of employment for residents of Riverton were the manufacturing (26 per cent), community/social/personal (20 per cent), the wholesale/retail/hospitality sectors (18 per cent), and the agricultural/forestry/fishing (13 per cent) sectors. Workers in the town itself, however, were concentrated in the last three of these sectors; with two-thirds of them employed in the community/social/personal (39 per cent) and wholesale/retail/hospitality (27 per cent) sectors of the local economy.

⁹ Examples of recently completed projects include the Riverton Variety Day; the Around the Beach Golf Challenge; historical lighting and paving; main street improvements costing \$30,000; the Festival of the Horse Cavalcade; the Model Miniatures Exhibition; an upgrade of the Riverton Baths; the development of walkways on the foreshore costing \$40,000; signage for Southern Scenic Route; and an oral history project.

Table 9: Sectoral distribution of the workforce of Riverton - 1996

Sector	Residents of Riverton	Persons whose workplace is at Riverton	New Zealand Workforce
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	12.7	11.4	9.2
Mining	0.4	0.8	0.3
Manufacturing (1)	26.2	6.8	14.3
Electricity/gas/water supply	0.4	-	0.5
Construction	5.2	5.3	5.8
Wholesale/retail/hospitality	18.3	27.3	22.3
Transport/communications	4.8	3.8	5.3
Financial/business	8.3	5.3	13.1
Community/social/personal	19.6	39.4	23.0
Total number of persons	687	396	1,630,812

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

Note: (1) The manufacturing sector includes residents who were employed at the freezing works in the district.

Some residents are employed at Brightwood's timber processing plant at Otautau, others commute to Invercargill or the freezing works at Makarewa and Lorneville. More part-time work has recently become available at the two restaurants in Riverton. The town is also becoming a retirement centre. A lifestyle village with hospital and retirement homes has been established on the former hospital site and is providing jobs for local people. There is also good demand for labour in the dairy industry, but jobs are hard to fill as this type of farming requires long hours of work at rates of six or seven dollars per hour for workers under 20 years. It is difficult for young people to get jobs on fishing vessels however. Newcomers to the industry need deck hands' certificates, and personal connections are a primary factor in securing employment.

Residents of the town had a lower participation rate in the labour force than the national population (48 per cent cf. 59 per cent for NZ) in 1996. The rate of unemployment was slightly lower than the national average, as Table 10 reveals, although there were relatively fewer residents who were employed on a full-time basis (36 per cent cf. 45 per cent for NZ).

Table 10: Employment status of the residents of Riverton 1996

	Wages & Salary %	Self Employed & Employer of others %	Unemployed %	Full-time %	Part-time %
Riverton	36.8	8.3	4.7	35.7	12.7
New Zealand (TLA)	43.5	11.0	4.9	45.0	13.6

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

The long term unemployed are the most vulnerable group in Riverton. They are either men over 40 years of age who have been without jobs for over a decade, or younger people who have been on a succession of training courses. A few residents are employed on community work schemes at the kindergarten, schools and Riverton Baths.

Over the twenty year period from 1976 the proportion of Riverton's residents reporting high status white collar occupations increased from 13 to 23 per cent, while the proportion of clerks fell from 11 to six per cent (see Table 11). Moreover, people engaged in service and sales occupations, who had comprised 21 per cent of Riverton's workers in 1976, represented only 14 per cent of the workforce twenty years later. By contrast

the proportion of residents with agricultural and fishery occupations remained relatively constant at about 10 per cent.

Table 11: Occupational status of the workforce of Riverton - 1976 & 1996

Occupational Category	% of workforce	
	1976	1996
administrators/managers	1.0	7.9
professionals & technicians	11.9	14.9
clerks	10.7	5.7
service/sales	20.5	13.6
agriculture & fisheries workers	10.1	10.5
trades workers/machine operators/elementary occupations	45.3	45.2
Total Number of Persons	497	684

Source: New Zealand Census 1976 & 1996

Household incomes and welfare benefits

The household incomes of Riverton's residents in 1996 were relatively low by national standards (see Table 12). Thirty-five per cent of the town's households (cf. 23 per cent for NZ) indicated they had incomes of under \$20,001, while only 12 per cent (cf. 27 per cent) reported incomes over \$50,000 per annum.

Table 12: Distribution of Household Incomes in Riverton - 1996

Household Income Range	% of households	
	Riverton	New Zealand
\$20,000 & under	34.7	22.9
\$20,001 - \$50,000	40.9	32.9
\$50,001 & over	12.0	27.1

Source: New Zealand Census 1996

Census data regarding income support reinforce this picture of Riverton as a relatively deprived community that is heavily dependent on welfare payments from the government; with 51 per cent of the town's residents (aged 15 years & over) receiving at least one form of income support in 1996 (cf. 35 per cent for NZ). The main forms of income support they received were national superannuation (48 per cent of total benefits cf. 40 per cent for NZ), the unemployment benefit (21 per cent of total benefits cf. 20 per cent for NZ), the domestic purposes benefit (eight per cent of total benefits cf. nine per cent for NZ), and the invalid's benefit (seven per cent of total benefits cf. four per cent for NZ). In November 1999 an estimated 200 people in Riverton were receiving the unemployment, domestic purposes, and sickness benefits from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ). Some of the people receiving the unemployment benefit were supplementing it with earnings from part-time or seasonal work.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND AGENCIES

Local government and infrastructure

Riverton was proclaimed a municipality and divided into two wards on 28 June 1871 (Anon, 1971: 4). It was constituted as a borough eight years later (Miller, 1975: 50). The Riverton Borough Council was dissolved

in 1983 when the town came under the jurisdiction of the Wallace County Council, and was administered from Otautau (Pankhurst, 1985: 189).

In 1989 the Southland County Council amalgamated with the Wallace County Council, the Stewart Island Borough Council and the Winton Borough Council, to form the Southland District Council which is based in Invercargill. The citizens of Riverton are represented by a community board and elect representatives of the Riverton ward to the district council.

The SDC opened a service centre in Riverton after amalgamation, and this facility has helped residents to maintain their accessibility to services. The service centre was combined with a local library that was upgraded by the SDC. Prior to amalgamation the Wallace County Council had a works depot at Riverton. Since then the SDC has closed the depot with the loss of three jobs, and its tasks are now performed by private contractors. The town obtains its water from the Aparima river, but decreased flows during the summer months restrict the supply that is available for households and business firms (The Western Star, October 1999).

District planning and the fishing industry

In July 1972 the Riverton Borough Council established a fishing industry zone in the town (section 84, block 25) that was south of the boundary of the fire station site. There were several ordinances included in the Riverton District Scheme that regulated activities in the zone. The predominant uses of the zone were for wharves; mooring; the loading and unloading of vessels; and the clubrooms and launching facilities of aquatic sports. The conditional uses included fish packing and processing; fish curing and cleaning; slipways for the survey and repair of vessels; warehouses and storage facilities for the fishing industry; parking lots; and canteens, dining rooms, ablutions and recreational facilities for people employed in the zone (Pankhurst, 1985: 97).

Since the inception of the Resource Management Act (1991), however, there have been no significant developments with regard to the activities of the fishing industry at the port of Riverton that have required resource consents. Neither does the current district plan address any issues relating to the activities of the industry.

Housing

The booms in the rock lobster and paua fisheries between 1970 and 1985 had a dramatic impact on the real estate market in Riverton. Many of the town's more expensive dwellings were built by operators who had made good returns from these fisheries (Logie, 1980: 52). A local businessman who arrived in the town in 1961, for instance, identified 17 fishers who built new homes during this period.

After this boom period the nature of the real estate market in the town reflected what was happening in other parts of rural New Zealand. About 20 years ago rates began rising to meet the costs of replacing the town's infrastructure. A number of retired people with fixed incomes, many of whom were from the more established "*settler*" families, sold their houses and moved out of the town. Some of these people sold their dwellings at less than the government valuation. By the late 1980's the Housing Corporation was assisting some welfare beneficiaries and low income families to buy or rent properties in Riverton. Over the last decade, however, some of these welfare beneficiaries have moved to the Ohai-Nightcaps area as they discovered that it was too expensive for them to live in Riverton.

Holiday homes in Riverton were traditionally owned by people from Invercargill, and they continue to be purchased by professionals, such as lawyers and doctors, from that city. A number of these homes have been purchased recently by people from Auckland, Australia, the United States and Hong Kong as they are cheaper than those available in Queenstown, and this has given the town a more "*cosmopolitan flavour*".

The prices of the various types of dwellings available in Riverton at the end of 1999 were \$70,000 to 80,000 for a medium range house; \$40,000 to 50,000 for a standard holiday home; \$80,000 to \$100,000 for upper tier of holiday homes preferred by professionals from Invercargill and foreigners; \$5,000 to \$8,500 for a section¹⁰ in the town; and \$40,000 for a section on the waterfront or in the holiday home area. The private rental of a three bedroom house, moreover, is between \$90 and \$100 per week.

The tenure of the town's housing varied from the national pattern in 1996. Over three quarters of dwellings in Riverton were owned by one of their occupants, while only a sixth of them were rental properties (see Table 13). Furthermore, as Table 14 indicates, there were relatively more unoccupied private dwellings in the town (24 per cent cf. 18 per cent) than is typical for rural centres because of the high incidence of holiday homes.

Table 13: *Tenure of Dwellings in Riverton - 1996*

Form of Tenure	% of dwellings	
	Riverton	New Zealand
Provided rent free	2.1	3.7
Rented	16.3	22.9
Owned with a mortgage	34.3	35.2
Owned without a mortgage	41.4	31.1
Total number of dwellings	717	1,276,332

Table 14: *Unoccupied Private Dwellings in Riverton - 1996*

	Number of Occupied Private Dwellings	Number of Unoccupied Private Dwellings	Total Private Dwellings	Unoccupied Dwellings as per cent of Total Private Dwellings
Riverton	720	229	949	24.1
All Rural Centres	29,349	6,275	35,624	17.6

Health

The Riverton Hospital was established in 1878, and was an important part of the Southland Hospital Board system for many years (Miller, 1975: 46-47). It had a maternity wing, and a number of geriatric beds prior to its recent closure by the Southern CHE Board Ltd. The hospital's closure has resulted in a loss of employment for some local people, although a few additional jobs have been created since the establishment of a retirement village on its former site. The town's daily 'meals on wheels' service has been replaced by one delivering frozen meals on a weekly basis. This change has reduced the independence of some elderly people who depended on the 'meals on wheels' service, and they have been moved into care.

Twenty years ago Riverton had an "overworked" doctor and an ambulance service. The ambulance service was withdrawn from the town, and was replaced in 1987 by the Riverton First Response Unit. The latter is a voluntary organisation that now operates an ambulance from St Johns on a 'user-pays' basis with members from a wide range of occupations (The Western Star, April 1996). The town has a medical centre with two resident doctors, while a physiotherapist visits two days per week and an optometrist visits as required. The nearest hospital these days is at Invercargill.

¹⁰ Sections are typically 700-800 square metres in area.

Four-fifths of the respondents in a recent survey of residents of Riverton Ward (Southland District Council, 1997: 90-91) ranked the health and medical services available in the district either as 'very good' (53 per cent) or 'good' (27 per cent). Just under a fifth of them, however, reported that they had to travel to Invercargill to access specialist medical services.

Education and training

The Provincial Government declared Riverton a school district in 1860, and by 1864 the school had a roll of 31 pupils (Miller, 1975: 41). In 1881 the Riverton District High School was established by combining the primary and secondary departments of the former school. The district high school survived until the end of 1973, when it was replaced by the Riverton Primary School for children to standard four level and Aparima College for children from forms one to seven (Perkins, 1985: 43, 105 & 109). The Riverton Primary School opened with an initial roll of 263 in 1974. The roll grew to 340 during the rock lobster boom, but by the middle of the 1980's the number of pupils at the school had dropped back to 250 (Pankhurst, 1985: 189).

Aparima College had 270 pupils at the end of 1999. The catchment of the college is Orepuki in the west; Fairfax (en route to Otautau) in the north, and Waimatuku/Wrights Bush in the east. The roll reached 330 in the 1980's, but since then there has been a steady decline in the number of children attending the college. Riverton had a more transitory population twenty to thirty years ago, when people came with their families from the North Island to work on fishing vessels, or at the processing plant at Riverton, during the rock lobster and paua booms. At present there are only a few children at the college whose families depend on the fishing industry for their livelihood. Dairy conversions, however, have brought farming families from the North Island to the district, and added children to the roll. Moreover, Aparima College has been able to retain more children at the top end of school by offering a range of vocational courses. Thus the size of the roll has been kept steadier; declining by only 26 pupils over the last six years.

There are few training opportunities available for either school leavers or long-term unemployed people at Riverton. The Oraka-Aparima Runaka of Ngai Tahu was operating a carving programme for younger people, both Maori and Pakeha, in November 1999, and had previously run carpentry and self-esteem courses under the TOPS scheme. There are also other training programmes available in the district; including a dairy course at Makarewa, and several basic and advanced hospitality courses in Invercargill; but access to them is difficult for people from Riverton who are without transport.

Agencies

Residents of Riverton travel to Invercargill to when they require the services of a government agency, although the income section of WINZ visits the town on the first Thursday morning of each month at the service centre of the SDC.

COMMUNITY

Cultural values and occupational identity

Religion and kinship are two significant factors that have been the basis of social relationships in the district. The town has been traditionally divided along religious lines between Presbyterians and Roman Catholics. This religious difference persists today, although not to the same extent as existed forty to fifty years ago.

Two local historians highlight the kinship bonds between residents of the district:

“The history of any place however is really the history of its people and those who pioneered it, and many of those who worked with Captain Howell on the Riverton Whaling Station are

remembered today through their descendants, who carry on the names of these earliest Rivertonians into the fishing industry of today.” (Anon, 1972)

“Riverton is, to use a modern term, a "survivor". Dogged perseverance is its forte. People who were born here tend to stay here; the same family names keep cropping up on school rolls, on war memorials. Everyone seems to be cousins.” (Perkins, 1985: 18)

A resident, we interviewed, observed that there was “*a vein of established families*” in Riverton when he arrived about 18 years ago. He found it difficult relating to these established families from pioneer days because of their negative attitude to outsiders. A woman, who left Riverton in 1965 when she was 12 and returned in 1982, stated that the community can be “*very difficult to break into*” for newcomers. She slipped back in because she came from an established farming family in the district; explaining that it is “*a caring community*” where people provide support in a crisis. Other informants described the community as “*closed*”, and the people of Riverton as “*proud of the town, really motivated and positive*”.

The influence of the established families has been diluted over the last two decades as some of them have moved out of the district, and been replaced by new arrivals. This influx of outsiders has led to “*a microcosm of society*” existing in this established community; with a mixture of low income families, professional people from Invercargill, immigrants and foreign nationals, and dairy farmers from the North Island buying or renting properties in the district. Newcomers who have been in the district for 20 years or less, tend stay in their own social groups; only mixing with the locals when they share a common interest (e.g. church).

Different occupational cultures also influence everyday life in Riverton. The dairy farmers from the North Island, for example, work very intensively, and have little involvement in community activities. These features of their lifestyle are very different from the customary behaviour of both the traditional pastoral farmers and the commercial fishers of the district. Fishers are a fragmented social group as they are frequently away from their home port. They are reputed to be strong-willed individuals who habitually solve their daily problems in an ad hoc manner. Furthermore, their activities are now more business-like than their carefree style of life during the rock lobster and paua booms when the industry was less regulated.

Community leadership and organisations

Farming families have traditionally had a major role in community affairs in rural New Zealand. Since the 1980's when there has been a trend for husbands to remain on the farm while wives went to work, there has been a decline in the amount of voluntary work undertaken by farming families in the Riverton district. A local businessman believes that dairy farmers who have recently arrived in the district “*lack community spirit*”, and use their working schedule as a pretext for avoiding their involvement in the community. This withdrawal of the farming families from community activities has contributed to the difficulties of local organisations in finding suitable people to act as officers.

The Riverton district had in excess of 120 community organisations and groups, and 17 hall and meeting places in 1993 (Southland District Council, 1993: 4). It has a wide range of voluntary organisations in the including cultural and craft groups, churches, scouts and guides, welfare groups, school boards, sports clubs and farming organisations. A recent survey of 21 organisations in the district (Southland District Council, 1997: 109) found that their most important needs were for more volunteers/members, training for volunteers, paid administration and improved liaison with the SDC.

Two examples of community organisations with a broader focus than those noted above are the Riverton Community Charitable Trust and the Riverton Organic Co-op. The Riverton Community Charitable Trust employs a community worker and an office secretary. It has twelve members who seek funding for various projects. The community worker provides an advisory service; refers people to appropriate agencies such

as a budget service; liaises with government agencies such as WINZ; and organises parenting and other courses.

The Riverton Organic Coop was founded in February 1991. It began with six families selling only fruit, but by 1996 some 40 families had sold an extensive range of organic foods over the previous three years with an average annual turnover of \$25,000. The Coop has a coordinator and jobs are divided up annually between members (Guyton, 1996: 11).

Residents participate to varying degrees in the district's community organisations. A survey of 537 people found that 33 per cent of them belonged to at least one community group or organisation, 17 per cent to at least two groups, 11 per cent to at least three groups, and 6 per cent to four or more groups. The largest group of these respondents were involved in sports clubs (190), followed by churches (125), and schools (100). Sixty-three per cent of all respondents gave reasons for their involvement with community organisations. The predominant reasons were interest; followed by socialisation, relaxation, family, and skill development (Southland District Council, 1997: 28, 30).

Social Problems

Drug and alcohol abuse, and minor offences against property appear to be major social issues for residents of Riverton. A night patrol has recently been established in response to residents' concerns about the growing incidence of vandalism in the town, and a skateboard park is being developed to provide a broader range of leisure activities for young people.

Unemployment, particularly for school leavers and older men who have been employed for more than ten years, continues to be a problem for the community even though there has been some job growth in the town over the last year or so.

Maori

People identifying themselves as Maori comprised 18 per cent of Riverton's population in 1996 (cf. 15 per cent for NZ). The town has the second highest concentration of Maori (after Ohai-Nightcaps) in Southland. About half of the Maori population are from outside the Riverton area; with the remainder being from the Waitaha or Ngai Tahu tribes.

The Oraka-Aparima Runaka of Ngai Tahu have a marae at Colac Bay and an office in Riverton. Since 1991, when the Resource Management Act came into effect, the Runaka has become well organised. An umbrella organisation of Southland Runaka called "Te Ao Marama" refers resource consent issues from the district and regional councils to individual Runaka for input to the process. Four years ago, for example, the Oraka-Aparima Runaka was able to persuade the SDC to improve the treatment of sewage at Riverton.

Ngai Tahu also have concerns about the management of fisheries around the Southland coast. Paua, for instance, is an important component of the tribe's traditional diet and its shell is used to decorate carvings and adornments. It also strengthens the mana of the tribe every time it is offered to visitors on the marae (Elvy *et al.*, 1997: 10). The Oraka-Aparima Runaka is keeping records of the catch history of various species to help establish a quota for customary fishing rights. They are negotiating for a percentage of the catch to be allocated for customary purposes. At present they manage customary fishing by issuing a permit. This permit allows a fisher to harvest above the recreational take. The Runaka also has concerns about the amount of pollutants that are being flushed along the rivers into the ocean and affecting fish stocks. They would also like the nursery areas around the coast to be closed off for fishing. Te Wae Wae Bay, for instance, could be closed off during the spawning season as it is the nursery for rig, flounders, and elephant fish.

Women

Fishing is a male dominated occupation, and very few women have worked as deck hands or skippers of vessels that operate from Riverton. Nonetheless, the work practices of the industry have significant effects on the families of fishers; particularly for those with young children. Nowadays, there are few fishers based at the port who only make 'day' trips. The rest are out to fill their boat to capacity, and stay out at sea longer. Men are sometimes away fishing for 10 days or two weeks at a time. And a woman may only have her husband home for one or two days before he goes back to sea again. Although a woman and her children may talk to their husband/father on a cell phone every day, his frequent absence from the home puts stress on family relationships. A mother may even lack support if the grandparents of her children reside in Riverton as the grandparents may still be working themselves. Otherwise she must get support from a community groups to which she belongs. One of the aims of the Riverton Community Charitable Trust (see above) is to met this need by organising programmes for mothers with young children who feel isolated from the rest of the community.

CONCLUSION

The economic development of the Riverton district during the 19th century was based on the successive exploitation of natural resources: whaling, agriculture, indigenous timber, gold and flax. The fishing industry was a late developer in this process of natural resource exploitation, with a significant fleet operating out of Colac Bay at the end of the century. After two or three decades fishing in the district reverted to a minor economic activity, and did not reemerge as a significant contributor to the district's economy until the 1950's when Riverton became a base for the rock lobster fleet.

More recent booms in the rock lobster and paua fisheries attracted newcomers to the Southland region and generated strong economic growth for ports such as Riverton. Subsequent resource depletion and restrictions on the harvesting of particular species have not only subjected individual operators to financial pressures, but have also affected the turnover of other business firms in the district.

The QMS has had several significant effects on the operations of the fishing industry and associated communities like Riverton. There has been a separation of ownership and harvest rights of the rock lobster quota that has created cultural barriers between owners and leaseholders of quota, and their conflicting interests could have serious implications for the sustainability of the fishery. Many seasonal and part-time fishers have left the industry due to the additional expenses and record keeping required by the QMS.

Some residents of Riverton are employed in other resource industries in the district, including the timber processing plant at Otautau and freezing works at Makarewa and Lorneville, while others commute to Invercargill to work. Tourism has emerged as an important contributor to the regional economy. Riverton's location on the coastal tourist route provides business people with an excellent opportunity to earn revenue from the growing number of domestic and international visitors to Fiordland who pass through the district, as well as from holiday makers from Southland who visit the town during the summer. Over the last decade community leaders and the Southland District Council have promoted Riverton and its hinterland as a tourism destination by improving local amenities, and by organising events such as the Festival of the Horse and the Riverton Carnival.

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