Business historians will find much of interest here. From the detailed portraits of the "everyday life" of consumption across social classes to the innovative business practices of advertising and distribution by department stores (where Mexican businesses were only just behind U.S. innovators and on par with new enterprises in Germany and Britain), the book offers important new evidence and insights. Most importantly, perhaps, it offers a case of the complex nature of business and consumption outside the North Atlantic in a late-developing context. Carefully avoiding the all-too-common division between "foreign" and "domestic" forces, Bunker illustrates the multiple ways in which Mexico's engagement with the Atlantic economy yielded cultural and economic changes deeply integrated in local society.

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Making Seafood Sustainable: American Experiences in Global Perspective. *By Mansel Blackford.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. xii + 273 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, index. Cloth, $45.00. ISBN: 978-0-8122-4393-2.
doi:10.1017/S0007680515000562

Reviewed by David Kinkela

Garrett Hardin's influential 1968 essay, "The Tragedy of the Commons," explored the problem of economic self-interest. From the perspective of a herdsman, he asked theoretically, "What is the utility to *me* of adding one more animal to my herd?" The question, however, was not so simple. Because the commons was a shared space, the impact of an individual decision had profound consequences. For example, if one herdsman added more cattle or sheep, others would logically increase the size of their herds to compete economically. The combination of these individual decisions, Hardin argued, placed additional strain on the commons. Within a short time, the commons would become unsustainable.

In *Making Seafood Sustainable,* historian Mansel Blackford examines the history of the commons through a thought-provoking, highly engaging, and significant study of the American fishing industry. Indeed, Blackford explores the contested history of modern fishing, revealing a story of change in which independent fishers who extracted as much

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007680515000562 Published online by Cambridge University Press

fish as they liked from unregulated seas gave way to a regulatory system designed to make fishing sustainable. It is also a story of technological change, capital investment, and the increasing power of big business. At its core, however, *Making Seafood Sustainable* examines the costs and benefits of enclosing the seas, which Blackford suggests offers the possibility of creating sustainable seafood. "By enclosing the commons and by instituting new regulatory regimes," Blackford argues, "nations could make harvesting seafood sustainable" (p. 27).

This book explores the formation of fishery regulations in the United States and the social, political, economic, and environmental impacts of these regulatory regimes. In doing so, Blackford examines the various actors and interests that shaped this history: the fishers, consumers, regulatory regimes, state and federal governments, and international trade networks. Divided into three sections—"Government Regulation," "The Industry," and "Changing the Food Chain"—Blackford effectively weaves stories about particular fishers, regulatory regimes, locations, and issues into a solid narrative highlighting the divisive nature of sustainable seafood production.

He also effectively describes how the things we call "seafood"—cod, salmon, crabs, and tuna, for example—shaped the story as well. The biological and ecological realities of these aquatic animals underscore the challenges of modern fishing and the limitations of an unregulated ocean. The story of the Atlantic cod is particularly illuminating. The cod was once a species so bountiful that fishers of the Grand Banks could simply harvest fish from the sea without much effort. With the advent of big ships and more technologically sophisticated instrumentation—sonar, GPS, lorans, trawl nets, and hydraulic power blocks—cod became ever more susceptible to overharvesting. Despite efforts to limit catches, the Atlantic cod fishery collapsed, which, as Blackford argues, not only was an environmental catastrophe, but "imposed tremendous damage on people and their towns" (p. 36).

By exploring the processes that transformed open-access fishing to closed-fishing regimes, Blackford produces a rich legal, business, and social history. The formation of the regulatory regimes, for example, illuminates how lawmakers understood the complexity of the ocean world and the animals that lived there. By imposing a two-hundred-mile exclusive economic zone from the shore to the open ocean based on the U.N. Law of the Sea Convention and the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, as well as forming regional regulatory regimes like the New England Fishery Management Council and the North Pacific Fishery Management Coalition, lawmakers sought to both protect the seas from foreign fishers and ensure the availability of seafood for

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007680515000562 Published online by Cambridge University Press

American consumers. The legal underpinning of sustainable seafood is, perhaps, one of the more interesting aspects of the book.

From a business perspective, the conclusions Blackford logically draws are particularly vexing. The move toward more sustainable fishing, for instance, has increased the political and economic influence of big business. Because of regulatory limits on the amount and timing of catches, small-scale fishers have often found themselves on the outside of these new regulatory regimes, while large, privately owned businesses like Red Chamber, Trident Seafood, and Pacific Seafood Group wield much power and influence within the fishing industry. In other words, the regulatory regimes constructed to make fishing sustainable privileged the large over the small, the technologically advanced over traditional forms of fishing, and the well-connected over the independent fisher. These changes, Blackford notes, highlight "the trade-offs lawmakers approved to bring their regulatory regime into existence. For one thing, many fishers lost their jobs. Women and Alaskan Natives often found themselves excluded from commercial fishing" (p. 6).

The issues Blackford raises are profound. Does the production of sustainable foods require the consolidation, corporate ownership, or vertical integration of the fishing industry? Do the costs of regulation prevent sustainable fishing on a small scale? Can we, or should we, reconcile some of the inherent contradictions between the promise of sustainable fishing versus its reality?

Over the past thirty years, the organic farming movement has undergone similar changes. Large corporate interests have replaced small-scale farming. Yet, because the growing, buying, and selling of produce remains so different than fishing, small farmers can grow food sustainably and sell it locally, thus sidestepping the regulatory hurtles of achieving "certified organic" status. Fishers, as Blackford describes, are not as fortunate. The regulatory regimes constructed to make fishing sustainable largely prohibit such alternatives, though Blackford provides a few examples of how restaurateurs have worked with small fishers to secure locally caught seafood for local consumption. Fishing for a global market, it seems, demands massive capital investment.

Despite the challenges of creating sustainable seafood, the story is not entirely grim. As Blackford describes, while the construction of regulatory regimes had profound economic, social, and political impacts, the process of forging these laws provided a sense of cooperation rather than competition. "Workable solutions to difficult problems," Blackford suggests, "were possible in open political systems in which members of different groups had at least some trust in each other and in which they shared basic assumptions about the parameters of feasible actions" (p. xi). Even with the best intentions, however, it is clear that

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007680515000562 Published online by Cambridge University Press

mechanisms developed to transform wild-caught fish into sustainable seafood have taken a utilitarian approach. The noted American forester Gifford Pinchot, for example, who promoted a conservation ethic designed to ensure sustainable yields of timber in the early twentieth century, would be familiar with the people and regulatory regimes in Blackford's story.

In the end, *Making Seafood Sustainable* tells an important story that poses difficult questions about nature, economies, regulation, business, and the meaning of sustainability. It reveals the complexity of regulating the commons to ensure a more sustainable future, while recognizing the costs associated with enclosure. Given the technological transformation of modern fishing and its impact on aquatic ecosystems, however, readers may ask whether fish sustainability is possible at all.

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The Great Rent Wars: New York, 1917–1929. *By Robert M. Fogelson.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. viii + 495 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, notes, index. Cloth, $45.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-19172-1.
doi:10.1017/S0007680515000574

Reviewed by Benjamin Holtzman

The Great Rent Wars is a compelling and richly detailed chronicle of the fierce battles between New York City's landlords and tenants from the end of World War I to the cusp of the Great Depression. Though fueled by longstanding antipathy between the property-owning class and the city's tenanted population, these clashes derived principally from swiftly rising rents during a severe housing shortage following the end of the war. Facing tenant pressure, state legislators took the unprecedented step of imposing controls on rental housing. Fogelson's work is less argument driven than it is a meticulous narrative about the short life of these regulations. Relying on judicial proceedings and decisions, newspapers, and municipal and state reports and administrative records, Fogelson has produced a thorough account of this significant period in the history of housing and state regulation.

The late teens were a frightening time for New York's tenants. Housing construction had essentially ceased, as the war caused steep increases in construction costs and limited access to capital. With the city's population continuing to rise, the vacancy rate in 1920 fell to an

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007680515000562 Published online by Cambridge University Press