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Fewer young people are joining small-scale fishery co-ops in Chile

Chile is known for important work on their Territorial User Rights Fishery (TURF). Back in the 90s, the government enacted policies to give small-scale fishers more control over fisheries management. To participate in the TURF system, fishers join licensed fishery associations called *caletas*. Children of TURF members typically join the same caletas as their family. However, this is starting to change as fewer young people follow in their parents' footsteps.

Globally, small-scale fishing communities are generally aging. It's becoming more and more rare for new people to join small-scale fisheries, especially younger people, so the age demographics of these fisheries are skewing older over time. While it's usually good to diversify an area's income-generation, particularly away from a reliance on extractive activities that will be impacted by climate change, disruptions to the social fabric of communities by a changing workforce could have negative consequences.

In 2013, the authors conducted two in-person surveys of over 200 caletas members from nine communities along the coast due west of Santiago, Chile. The results suggest that over 50% of respondents believe there is no future for small-scale fisheries. Nearly all those surveyed did not want their children to become small-scale fishers themselves. Only 11% of respondents were under 40 years old, emphasizing the lack of young people entering the TURF system. The stated reasons for the stalled growth "primarily concerned working conditions (e.g., risk of injury, physical difficulty of the work, lack of family time), the appearance of 'better' options outside of fishing, and the simultaneous lack of profitability in fishing associated with declines in marine resource abundances." Competition from industrial fishing fleets was also a common complaint.

Small-scale fishery managers should take note of these shifting demographics, particularly as the membership of caletas is likely to decline over time if these trends continue. With fewer local fishers, communities will have to rely on large-scale fishing fleets for their food, which could have greater impacts on the ecosystem.

This is a summary of:
Gone fishing?
Intergenerational cultural shifts can undermine common property co-managed fisheries

Accessible at:
<https://marxiv.org/tpkdu>

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Added to MarXiv:
May 2018

Published: Marine Policy, 2018

Suggested Citation:
Fewer young people are joining small-scale fishery co-ops in Chile. OCTO (2018). DOI: 10.31230/osf.io/4kt5g

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