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Title: A critical reappraisal of fisheries in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon with emphasis on the economic, social and political consequences of the Northern cod collapse in the late 1980s.

Biography

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Abstract

Since 1816, the islands of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, off Newfoundland have been the last foothold of France in North America. As in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (Canada), the fishery of the Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) was the *raison d'être* of this small archipelago. Yet, in 1992, the Canadian government decided to close the commercial cod fishery due to the collapse of the stocks. Based on the FAO database of fisheries landings, reconstructed catches from the *Sea Around Us* (www.seaaroundus.org) and grey literature, this study reappraises the history of the fisheries of these islands since 1950, focusing particularly on the consequences of the moratorium on cod fishing. This study revealed that the fishery fleet based in the Saint-Pierre et Miquelon archipelago changed dramatically, from small traditional boats ('dories') to large trawlers reaching up to 50 m. Catches strongly increased in the 1970s and 1980s, reaching 23,800 tonnes in 1991. At its peak, nearly half of the private sector of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon was employed in the fisheries, including 140 fishermen and about 300 land-based persons, mainly in fish processing. In 1993, catches declined to less than 2% and remained very low for four consecutive years. Then, they increased again up to 6,690 tons in 2000 before decreasing ever since. In the past two decades, the number of people involved in the fishery sector has dropped to a few dozens. Today, nearly half of the active population is government employees, which has allowed it to remain relatively stable (at about 6,300 inhabitants). This contrasts to nearby Canadian towns (Fortune, Grand Bank) where more than 20% of the population has left.

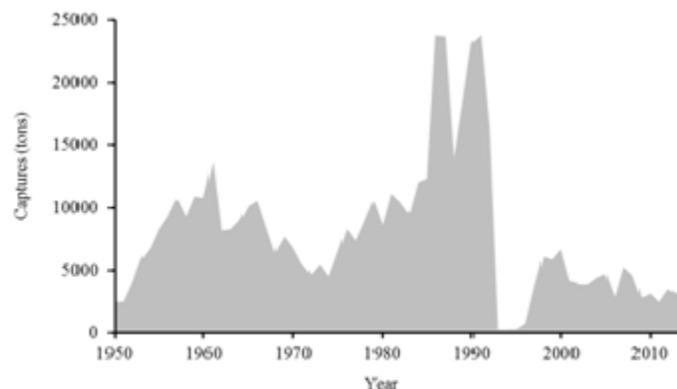


Figure 1: Captures from the Saint-Pierre et Miquelon fleet from 1950 to 2014 (based on the FAO database).



