PSCI 317: Public Policy Process

Policy Paper 3

Submit your written response as an electronic file—NOTE: .pages is NOT a supported file type, so save your file as pdf, google doc or .docx (MS Word) *before you submit*

According to political scientist Elinor Ostrom, an expert on “the tragedy of the commons” phenomenon, it is difficult to exclude individuals from using to maximum capacity open-access common pool resources, such as fisheries, forests, groundwater basins, grazing pastures, lakes, oceans and the atmosphere. Thus, these resources are “likely to be overharvested and potentially destroyed” without effective rules that limit access to the resource.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The assigned chapter, “Crisis and Recovery in the New England Fisheries,” explores how a tragedy of the commons occurred in the cod and other groundfish fisheries off the coast of New England. Once a prolific source of fish that fishermen had been harvesting from for over 400 years, catches are now severely restricted so that the fisheries can recover, but the process is slow. The [New England Fishery Management Council](https://www.nefmc.org/) recommended a harvest of just 3.9 million pounds for 2018. [[2]](#footnote-2)

The policy outcome in the case of the New England fisheries could be described as *policy failure* due to a poorly regulated “tragedy of the commons” in the groundfish fisheries. Beyond the U.S. the issue of declining fisheries is a global problem. In your paper assignment, addition to the New England Fisheries case study, read the articles,

* David Abel, ‘[A milestone in the true state of cod](https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2017/04/02/milestone-war-over-true-state-cod/OdTWfl2sw9z3VoZTwKaWjP/story.html)”, *Boston Globe*, April 3, 2017.
* Charles P. Wallace, “Global Fishing Controversies,” *CQ Researcher*, May 31, 2019.

Craft an essay using support from the readings that addresses the following:

1) Describe the policy problem of declining fisheries in the New England case and globally as described in *CQ Researcher* article.

2) In the case of the New England Fisheries, describe how government regulators and those in the fishing industry each contributed to the outcome of policy failure of unsustainability in the groundfish fisheries.

3) Identify and discuss two lessons that policymakers attempting to create regulations to keep fisheries sustainable should take away from the New England Fisheries case.

1. Elinor Ostrom, “The challenge of common pool resources,” *Environment* (July/August 2008). <http://www.environmentmagazine.org/Archives/Back%20Issues/July-August%202008/ostrom-full.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Patrick Whittle, “Why New England’s Cod Catch is at an All-Time Low.” *Boston Globe* (January 14, 2018) <https://www.boston.com/news/local-news/2018/01/14/cod-catch> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)