

# Rural places and globalising cultures: Interpreting rural economic, social and landscape change in Aotearoa New Zealand

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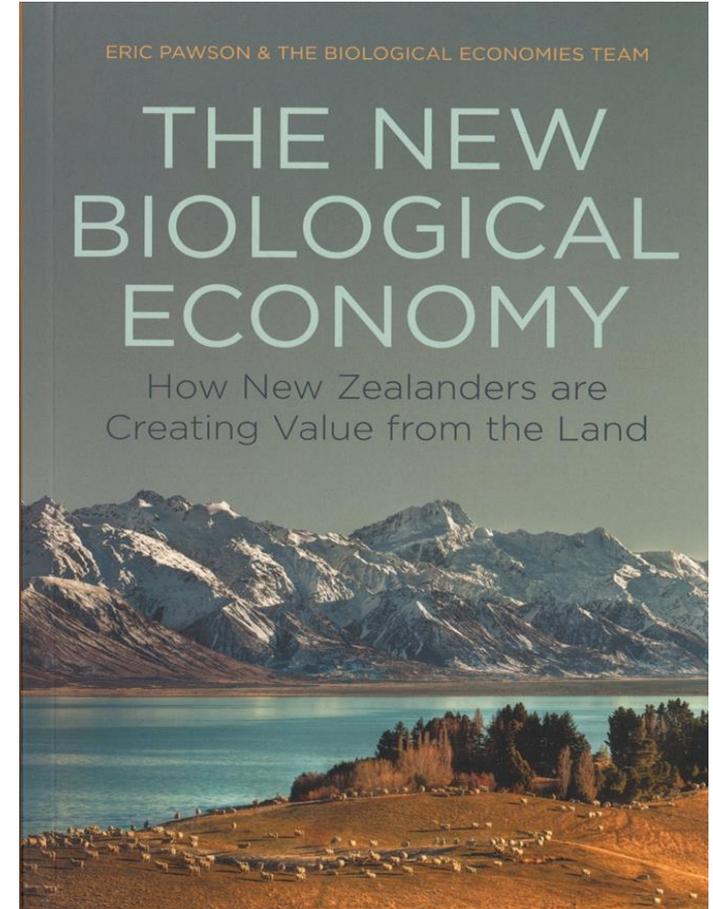
National  
**Science**  
Challenges

BUILDING BETTER  
HOMES, TOWNS  
AND CITIES

Ko Ngā wā Kainga hei  
whakamāhorahora

## Acknowledgements

- **Lucy Baragwanath/Jim McAloon/David Thorns** – globalising New Zealand?
- **Paul Cloke** – adventure and cetacean tourism
- **Eric Pawson** – knowing and creating new rural value and values, the relationships economy, merino, dairying
- **Mike Mackay/Nick Taylor/Deborah Levy/Malcolm Campbell** –rural multiple job holding, high amenity grape and wine production, amenity migration, agritourism, rural and small-town regeneration; super-productivist dairy farming landscapes, environmental limits setting
- **Biological Economies Team** – The New Biological Economy



- Positioning Aotearoa NZ
  - Rural impacts of restructuring 1980s & early 1990s
  - Rural impacts of restructuring mid-1990s to present
- Key theoretical influences
- Changed cultures of production & consumption – tourism, merino, dairying
- New people in the countryside – welcoming communities
- The Māori Taniwha cultural economy
- Conclusion

## Part 1: Positioning Aotearoa NZ

- From the 1840s to the late 1970s, ANZ's circumstances were understood as being:
  - **globally connected & internationally influenced** (tyranny of distance between markets & a small society with colonial/dominion/(in)dependent status – mining to pastoralism to UK→EEC/EU
  - but **domestically ameliorable** through strong government intervention
- From the late 1970s, **discourses of declinism and hyperglobalism** generated a perceived need for urgent change
- 1984 to the present, ongoing **neoliberal restructuring, marketised export agric. & tourism & allied state regulation & facilitation**



# Rural impacts of restructuring (1)



- Withdrawal of producer subsidies & sale of government production units and corporatisation of others
- Multiple rural economic and cultural impacts:

## **1980s & early 1990s**

- Rural business and service closures, farm aggregation
- Onset of decline of long established practices
- Onset of intra and inter-regional re-configuration

	2007	2017	% Change
Sheep	38.46	27.37	- 29%
Beef Cattle	4.39	3.61	- 18%
Dairy Cattle	5.26	6.47	+ 23%
Deer	1.40	0.85	- 39%

## **Stock numbers 30 June 2017 (million)**

**Source: Beef and Lamb NZ Economic Service**

## Impacts of restructuring (2)



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### **Mid 1990s – present**

- Entrepreneurial export-income orientated experimentation
- New products, organisations & human/non-human interactions
- Enhanced Crown conservation estate
- But also continued reliance in some sectors on low unit value bulk commodity production
- Environmental stressors
- Conflicts over desired future directions for localities

## In summary



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- Stimulated **multiple new experiences of globalising connection** for all New Zealanders
- But linked to significant elements of **continuity & path dependency**: The country's **natural capital** remains the dominant source of national income
- Significant **impacts** on rural localities & a range of **responses** involving a diversification of the **ways of knowing, and acting in and beyond, the countryside**
- This has introduced new rural residents/subjects, the entrepreneurial application of new technologies and the development of novel processes of production and consumption

## Part 2: Key theoretical influences

- Global countryside & multi-functional rural space – production, consumption, protection and their interactions
- The relational space economy
- Assemblage – emergence, multiplicity, fluidity & human & non-human action & interaction
- Amenity and other forms of migration
- Creating value and values – narratives and practices of quality in production for consumers
- The relationships economy
- Post-colonialism and the Māori Taniwha cultural economy



## Part 3: New cultures of production & consumption – tourism

- Tourism NZ – marketing – **100% Pure NZ**
- From 1980s strongly reinforced earlier attempts to attract international tourists – Now NZ’s largest export sector by income
- These visitors gaze on, and perform in, predominantly rural/conservation places
- Catered for and hosted often by family and small company owned businesses - exceptions
- Soft and hard adventure and extreme sport tourism, agritourism, cycling tourism, wine and (nascent) food tourism, ecotourism
- Dramatic globally networked transformation of rural sites, towns, services, occupations, infrastructure – service culture

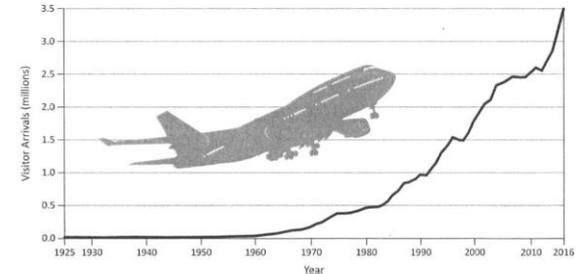
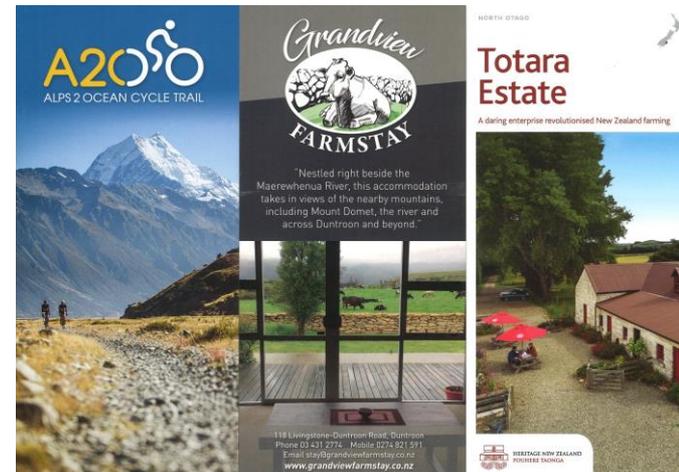


Figure 8.4: Annual international visitor arrivals to New Zealand 1925–2016.  
Source: Statistics New Zealand



## New cultures of production & consumption – merino

- Prior to the 1990s, mid-micron merino wool an undifferentiated low value commodity
- NZ Merino Company established by farmer entrepreneurs & Icebreaker by Jeremy Moon
- Wool and sheep reframed as “merino” - high value in recreational fashion - provenance
- Growers contracted to produce merino to “brand partners’ ” specifications – linking them closely with eg., Italy, China, Japan, USA
- Assured grower incomes in exchange for explicit commitments to metrologies & environmental/animal welfare – Zque auditing
- Growers now active in a culture of global networking & associated relationships



## New cultures of production & consumption – dairying

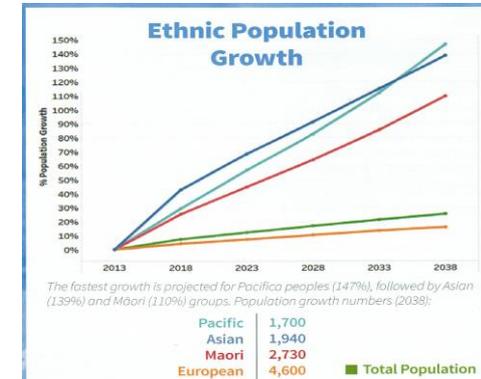


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- Many farmers converted to large herd dairying – China free trade agreement and overseas investment
- Introduced a culture of high input/high output superproductivism
- Dramatic rural landscape transformation and environmental management challenges
- Fonterra – NZ’s main dairy farmer’s cooperative now has global reach – listed in the world’s top 10 by production quantity
- Bulk of Fonterra NZ milk is dried and exported: a commodity from nowhere
- Several much smaller dairy processors aim at higher and provenanced value, eg., infant formula & nutraceuticals (functional food)

## Part 4: New people in the countryside – welcoming communities

- Dairy farming NZ-style is labour intensive cf. sheep & beef
- Dairying growth coincided with migration policy change – national cultural diversity
- Insufficient NZ labour for dairy and other rural work – recent permanent & temporary cyclic migration from Europe, the South Pacific, India, South East Asia, South Africa, South America & within ANZ (Māori & Pacifica)
- Case Study: Ashburton (pop 34,000) with strong dairy, meat processing, tourism and rural services sectors
- New people, languages, religions, foods & sport/recreational/cultural/housing preferences – Welcoming Communities



## Part 5: The Māori Taniwha cultural economy

- 1840: Treaty of Waitangi – colonial economic and cultural dispossession & marginalization
- 1975 to present: Waitangi Tribunal – Iwi tribal settlements - biculturalism
- Taniwha Economy: Māori now own 40% fish quota, 33% plantation forests, many large farms, much other real estate & tourism entities – drawn Māori enterprises into multiple new globalising rural activities
- Combine a value and values creation orientation (Kaitiakitanga/guardianship) - focus on creating collective Iwi benefits
- Ngāi Tahu Iwi, Kaikōura whale watching enterprise – assembled and co-constructed in human and cetacean performance



## Conclusion



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- Aotearoa New Zealand's countryside has been globalizing since the arrival of European colonists in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century
- Its rural landscapes have been, and continue to be, dramatically modified in this process
- Political and economic restructuring since the early 1980s has been consciously designed to expand opportunities for new rounds of value generating global connection
- In rural terms these opportunities have been built in a restless experimental search for ways of creating value, and often also more-than-economic values in the countryside
- The changes wrought by these processes are not always universally welcomed and are therefore the sites of conflict and negotiation



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Thank you

Questions?