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Studies in Historical Geography, Agrifood/Forestry & Geographic Thought

in

New Zealand

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Declaration

I declare that the materials contained in this thesis have not been submitted to any other University for the award of any degree.

Signed

Michael Roche

Abstract

The work presented for this thesis includes journal articles, book chapters, and one book produced over the span of 30 years and falls into three main domains; historical geography, contemporary agrifood/forestry research, and studies in the history of geographic thought. The historical geography work is further divided into research on forest history in New Zealand, on society and environment, largely in New Zealand in the last decade of the 19th century and early decades of the 20th century, and writing on the discharged soldier settlement scheme. The agrifood research spans from pipfruit to the meat industry. The associated forestry research ranges from afforestation policy, to privatization, corporate forestry, and forest governance. The history of geographic thought research considers the beginnings and distinguishing characteristics of geography in New Zealand. These bodies of work make a sizable and diverse contribution to the geographical literature and to interdisciplinary enquiries amongst geographers, environmental historians, and rural sociologists.

Chapter I

Introduction

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The research work presented in this thesis comprises of over 80 published items including journal articles, one book and numerous book chapters completed between 1985 and 2016. Thematically they range from historical geography to contemporary agrifood-forestry studies to work on the history of geographic thought and reflect the breadth and diversity of my research interests in geography. Each of these research themes is briefly described below, where an attempt has been made to situate the work within the wider literature and or disciplinary milieu at the time each piece was published. The three research themes have been gathered into seven clusters, four of which are focused on aspects of historical geography, all the agrifood-forestry research has been gathered together, with the final cluster dealing with the history of geographic thought. This arrangement highlights the dominant position of Historical geography in my research work. Felix Driver's (1988, 504) reminder, from the 1980s that, 'thinking historically is no luxury, on the contrary, it is an essential part of doing human geography', has after a fashion informed much but not all of my contemporary agrifood and forestry research. This has also meant that as an historical geographer working from New Zealand, the colonial context remains inescapably important, though most of the geographic academy anchor their work in other ways. Regardless of focus, in New Zealand the centrality of rural and urban land use questions remains fundamental to national development. I have been fortunate as a researcher to have been in a position to investigate some highly significant past and contemporary transformative moments of society and environment in New Zealand. My historical geography focus has enabled me to engage in and contribute original research to a number of international research foci and to make major advances to local and national understanding in these areas. Some of this work has contextualised selected social and environmental developments in New Zealand through comparative and cross-disciplinary

interrogation, a distinctive and still under deployed approach to research and scholarship.

1.1 Historical Geography

University geography in New Zealand, by most accounts dates back to occasional teaching of introductory courses, mainly by geologists, in the 1920s and 1930s, prior to the establishment of the first separate Department of Geography at Canterbury University College under George Jobberns in 1937. Kenneth Cumberland, who was Jobberns' first staff appointment in 1938, was to make a considerable contribution to the writing of historical geography in New Zealand. His colleague Andrew Clark was also a historical geographer, who while only a short-term staff member at Canterbury, managed to complete the fieldwork for his Berkeley PhD, later published as *The Invasion of New Zealand by People Plants and Animals* (Clark, 1949). Thus when Peter Perry (1969) came to write the first review of historical geography in New Zealand for the *New Zealand Geographer* on its 25th anniversary in 1969, he had a comparatively rich and diverse literature to deal with, even if methodological debate was largely conspicuous by its absence. Subsequent reviews of historical geography in New Zealand were undertaken by Heathcote and McCaskill (1972), Wynn (1977), and Hearn (1987). There was some loss of momentum in the 1990s as local practitioners retired, moved overseas or developed alternative research interests. Certainly historical geography in New Zealand in the 1990s and 2000s occupied a less prominent place in the discipline locally than it had in earlier decades. Paradoxically this happened at a time when some excellent historical geography was being written and historical geographers were in a position to contribute significantly to inter-disciplinary perspectives and discussions particularly on environmental change in New Zealand.

I was therefore pleased to accept the invitation from *History Compass* to write a literature review on historical geography in New Zealand (Roche, 2008b),

given it had been 20 years since the last such review and because there was new work to consider, some of it quite different in character from the literature that Hearn had discussed in 1987. Having, as a student and a new staff member, studied the previous review essays on New Zealand historical geography, I welcomed the opportunity to add my own interpretations to this thread of the sub-disciplinary literature for New Zealand and to range more widely beyond my usual research interests. Unlike Perry or Hearn, I was not specifically addressing an audience of geographers but one comprised of historians and a readership that was also international rather than primarily domestic. A particular challenge, which I acknowledged in the *History Compass* paper, was how to deal with my own work: I endeavoured to steer a course between ignoring it altogether and letting it significantly shape the structure of the overall review. The review juxtaposed new work in historical geography infused by the 'cultural turn' in human geography, other geographical contributions to environmental history, and Waitangi Tribunal related research. The review also captured a moment when historical geographers in New Zealand were arguably in better dialogue with historians than with other human geographers, exemplified by the Brooking and Pawson collaborations over environmental history and the *Empires of Grass* volume (Pawson and Brooking, 2000, 2002; Brooking and Pawson, 2011). The invitation to write for *History Compass* also occurred at a particular moment when historians' interest in historical geography was being renewed but also at a time when human geographer's interest in historical geography was, internationally at least, at something of a low point. The former situation may in part be linked to the expanding interest by historians in environmental history.

The relationship between historical geography and other human geography specialisms was never fixed, however, and in the wake of the 'cultural turn' in human geography, early this century, historical geography had unexpectedly become 'relevant' to human geography. This 'relevance' rested on the long experience that historical geographers have in working with documents as sources and occurred at a time when there was a new interest by human

geographers in qualitative methods. In this context, I accepted the invitation to write a chapter on archival research for the second edition of *Qualitative Methods in Human Geography* (Hay, 2005). This proved to be an especially rewarding exercise because the initial challenge lay in trying to write a chapter for human geographers more generally and not specifically for historical geographers. Thus my chapter also served as a reminder for human geographers not to become, as Pawson and Brooking (2002, xii) had remarked in a different but related context, too 'presentist' in their outlook.

The second challenge was to work out how to write about doing archival research in a way that was meaningful to human geographers beyond New Zealand. My chapter was limited to the Anglo-American world because my archival advice is shaped by context and some of its content will not travel. The third challenge, which only emerged as I began to write the chapter, was to confront the fact that my own introduction to archival work had been undertaken in a measured fashion, slowly, with plenty of trial and error, in something approximating an apprenticeship model, where competency in the archive was part of the historical geographers' craft. But I had acquired a largely tacit knowledge; the task was to try and re-write this understanding in a way that was accessible for geographers new to archival research, but without reducing it to a formulaic checklist or 'paint by numbers' approach. While I am pleased that the archival research chapter has remained in revised form in the third and fourth editions of the book, what has been unexpected is the degree of revision that has taken place with each edition. Thus in the 2016 fourth edition, I included a new section on the impact of digital devices on the practice of archival work as these have the capacity to both liberate and entrap the unwary archival researcher. For instance, digital images may make more visible pencil marks almost unreadable on original documents and maps, but the ease of copying materials can mean that the archive is being reproduced and downloaded onto the researcher's computer but without its contents being analysed.

Almost all of my published historical geography writing has focussed on aspects of 'settler society'. Growing up in the South Island and studying at the University of Canterbury from the mid-1970s to early 1980s, my appreciation of New Zealand settler society, in 19th and early 20th century, largely took the form of an encounter with 'nature'. It was only much later that Harry Evison's work (1993, 1997) revealed to me the Māori presence in Te Waipounamu. Prior to this Dame Evelyn Stokes (1987) had contributed a short paper to an 'Alternative Perspectives' special issue of the *New Zealand Geographer*, marking 50 years of New Zealand university geography which had been more formally celebrated by the book *Southern Approaches, Geography in New Zealand* (Holland and Johnston, 1987). Stokes pointed to the issues involved in Pākehā geographers doing research on Māori and offered some cautionary advice about the steps necessary for doing such research, all of which seemed fairly daunting. My research interests in any case lay elsewhere. Stokes was not, I think, trying to say Māori geography was only for Māori geographers, though historian Michael King would exit Māori history around the same time after a similar debate. Somewhat unexpectedly, a decade on, I was able to participate in some 'Māori geography research', which stemmed from an approach to a post graduate student from iwi to undertake research for and with them in the lead up to a Waitangi Tribunal claim. Although only the third author, this paper remains important to me for two reasons, it forced me to consider why I would not try and write an book length 'historical geography of New Zealand' and it was an early example of geographers thinking about the co-creation of knowledge in cross cultural contexts. It rounds out three pieces of writing on historical geography (McClellan, Berg, and Roche, 1997).

1.2 Forest History

Some of my post PhD historical geography research continued to reside, albeit with some changes in perspective and temporal focus, in the same broader domain of what was termed at the time 'forest history'. That was an

interdisciplinary space where historians, geographers, retired forestry and timber industry professionals and others converged to write about human impact on forests and less frequently forests impact on humans. In recent years forest history as a category has tended to be put to one side, except perhaps amongst IUFRO (International Union of Forest Research Organisations) members (e.g. Agnoletti and Anderson, 2000) and the term 'environmental history' has been used instead, as if it is a synonym, particularly by academic historians, even though the latter's remit is actually much broader. I have chosen not to re-categorise this body of my research work as 'environmental history', favouring instead the term 'forest history' since, at the time, the work was conceived of as an historical geography contribution to forest history. Furthermore, forests, forestry and the timber industry have remained fairly central too much of my work, even those parts that some historians regard as 'environmental history', so that 'forest history' still remains an apt label.

For convenience I have organized this body of work under headings of 'Timber Industry', 'Forest Policy and Management' and 'Biography' though, as the dates of publication attest, these papers and chapters were not written in discrete clusters and blocks of time with the focus on a single theme and indeed there are interconnections and cross fertilisation between pieces of writing in the different forest history sub-themes. For ease of reading, however, within each subtheme I have employed a chronological arrangement of the papers and chapters which also sits comfortably enough with the broadly geographical change over time approach that I have employed in my historical geography writing

The Timber Industry: This was not my entry point to the historical geography of forests and forestry in New Zealand, but is it the sub-theme that extends chronologically the farthest back into the past in my research and it makes sense to consider this material first. This work has been theoretically informed in a mix of attempts to apply commodity chain analysis, after Immanuel Wallerstein, to the spar trade in the pre-colonial era and to use Warwick

Armstrong's 'Dominion capitalism' ideas to understand the fractions of capital involved in the early domestic and export timber industry (Armstrong, 1978, Roche, 2008). The former highlighted some differences in the shape of the spar commodity chain emanating from New Zealand from that of the Americas, Scandinavia, and the Baltic and also emphasised that local traders in New Zealand were actively trying to make and sustain their place in the commodity chain, something that is rather lost sight of if you move from point of final consumption back to the origins of the chains as Wallerstein advises. Dominion Capitalism is ultimately less insightful, I would now suggest, because apart from a timber trade in softwood to Australian states and a reciprocal trade in hardwoods, wood was not of sufficient value to be more widely exported. The other work presented is concerned with the dynamics of the timber trade in the early 20th century, with its geography and the under explored relationship between the farmer and saw miller at the forest frontier; this latter focus was part of work undertaken for the *Historical Atlas of New Zealand* (Roche, 1997).

Forest Policy and Management: This strand of research was an early focus of attention and one that I have returned to in different ways in the last decade. These two phases of engagement are evident characterised by contrasting approaches and a different scale of analysis. I have, however, arranged these papers in an essentially chronological manner covering the period circa 1914 to 1990. One potential difficulty with this is that it places my more recently published work, which concentrates on the 1910s to 1920s, before the earlier published research dealing with the more recent past. The older work presented here, takes the form of two chapters from a book, *History of Forestry in New Zealand*, published in 1990, that provide a narrative account of state forestry in New Zealand from 1945 to 1987 when the New Zealand Forest Service was disestablished. The more recently published work focuses on some of the main forestry professionals who shaped the nature and implementation of forest policy in New Zealand particularly from 1915 to 1930. These various studies of key actors prefigured a more conceptual paper on imperial forestry networks and the flows of ideas, people, and materials (Roche, 2012), drawing

on and, to some degree, extending Alan Lester and David Lamberts' ideas about Imperial networks and 'Imperial Careering' (Lester, 2006, Lambert and Lester, 2006). Networks as flows of ideas, people and to a lesser extent material were subject of a more detailed treatment in a paper on Tung Oil tree networks in the 1920s and 1930s which took issue, amongst other things, with how some network theorists dealt with time (Roche, 2009).

For some years I was one of the few historical geographers or environmental historians in New Zealand writing about forests. This is now no longer the case by the early 21st century (e.g. Star, 2002; 2005; 2008, Star and Lochhead, 2002, Beattie, 2003; 2009, Beattie and Star, 2005; 2010, Wynn, 2002; 2004). This has prompted me to compare and contrast the contributions of historians and historical geographers and in addition to revisit some of my earlier views, particularly about the sources of the interest of government foresters in large scale exotic afforestation (Roche, 2015). Much of my writing actually occupies a different space from that taken by environmental historians, who were trained as historians, as it is concerned instead with reconstructing an historical geography of forestry, derived particularly from archival sources. This work in many cases represented a first attempt to recount the narrative rather than dealing with discourses such as environmental anxiety. In so doing, I have undertaken extensive archival research, endeavoured to appreciate the intellectual tradition of scientific state forestry as it played out in New Zealand, and been mindful of both the structural constraints that settler society imposed on scientific state forestry and of the agency of some individuals. The earlier work was, as almost a pioneering effort, written as a national survey, the later research has considered the interplays of ideas and individuals in particular contexts. A large 'mural' followed by a series of 'miniatures' would be one analogy. That said, I would position, in a comparative fashion, the 1980s and 1990 publications alongside some slightly earlier pieces of Australian and Canadian writing (e.g. Powell, 1976, Wynn, 1980).

Biography: Geographers typically have not had that much to do with biography, especially beyond the field of geographic thought. I can explain such an interest as being a product of my exposure to idealist and humanistic approaches to geography and maintaining an interest in 'agency' and 'actors', albeit at a time when human geography generally tended to be much more fascinated by 'structure'. The unexpected opportunity to undertake work of a biographical nature came with the commissioning by the government of a *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* in the 1990. This ran to five main volumes published from 1990 to 2000, later made available online in association with *Te Ara* the official online New Zealand Encyclopedia. On the basis of my then recently published *History of New Zealand Forestry* (Roche, 1990), I was invited to prepare an entry on Robert Holt, a 1850s timber merchant whose firm by 1985 had evolved to become part of a nationally significant forestry company, Carter Holt Harvey (Roche, 1993a). Having completed one biography I was asked to do another and successfully nominated some other individuals for inclusion. These included founding figures in state forestry in New Zealand, such as L.M. Ellis, as well as others involved in the timber industry and commercial pulp and paper manufacture.

The challenge of producing these entries lay in the abbreviated word length, sometimes a scarcity of primary information, as well as the requirement to follow the conventions that emerged as successive volumes of the dictionary were published. Having written a book about the forestry sector, with a particular focus in the role of the state (Roche, 1990), it was an stimulating intellectual exercise to then reverse the viewpoint as well as changing the scale to write a brief narrative on an individual's life and work, easier for those in government forestry but more demanding for figures in the timber industry who had in some instances had been fiercely critical of the State Forest Service. As a one off exercise this may not have been that rewarding, but by contributing a number of entries, it was possible to add a human dimension to the timber industry and forestry sectors in New Zealand.

1.3 Colonial and Dominions Society and Environment

This somewhat unwieldy title brings together a cluster of my research efforts that are bounded largely by the first three decades of the 20th century and almost entirely, but not completely, New Zealand focussed. This includes work on the early development of export apple growing, represented here by only one paper, a cluster of work on the frozen meat industry, other work at a range of scales on what might be termed land use planning and finally two papers on housing, considering state efforts prior to 1925.

The pipfruit paper traces how spraying became the preferred strategy for controlling introduced insect pests and how early experimentation with biological control methods were set to one side. It also promotes the orchard as a metaphorical alternative to US environmental historian Donald Worster's use of the garden as a particular site for understanding people - environment interrelations and sustainability. This paper has been selected for republication as part of the White Horse Press 'Themes in Environmental History' Series as part of the volume on farming. Pipfruit have been and remain a somewhat overlooked aspect of agricultural history and allied fields in relation to its importance to rural production systems. This paper remains a corrective to this tendency.

Growing up in Ashburton with, Longbeach estate owner, John Grigg's statue in the town square and Canterbury Frozen Meat, the company that Grigg helped establish, one of the pioneering New Zealand meat processing and exporting concerns, located at Fairton just out of town, and where several of my relatives had or were working, meant that the frozen meat industry was part of my consciousness long before it became a subject of academic inquiry. My engagement with the meat industry was entwined with some research that had a contemporary orientation, mainly joint work on agricultural and forestry sector restructuring in New Zealand (e.g. see Roche, 1996 and Theme Five) Considering the third food regime as part of the a collaborative contemporary

agrifood research project, not unsurprisingly for an historical geographer, led me to think more about the first and second food regimes in New Zealand, particularly with respect to the meat industry.

Initially, I drew on Fernand Braudel and Immanuel Wallerstein's world economy ideas but then settled on Friedmann and McMichael's (1989) food regimes theory (Roche, 1993). Most other agrifood scholars in sociology and geography, including Friedmann and McMichael (e.g. Friedmann, 1993, McMichael, 1993) themselves were more interested in studying the implications of the disintegration of the second food regime and searching for the emergence of a third food regime than in considering in more detail the advent of the first regime and the transition to a second regime. My attention instead was directed to using food regimes ideas, especially as they related to the first and second food regimes, in considering the emergence of the frozen meat trade in South Australia as well as publishing a comparative study of Argentina, Australia, and New Zealand. This latter study added some rich empirical detail to the first and second regimes, material not incorporated into the original Friedmann and McMichael analysis, but also suggested that when 'brought down to ground' the timing and spatial expression of the first and second food regimes is different for each of the three countries. Put another way the geographical element of food regimes had been under explored by the original food regime theorists. The paper in *Historical Geography* (Roche, 1999) sought to address this deficiency, though in the light of subsequent work (Roche et al., 1999) it undertook the national comparisons in perhaps a too taken for granted methodologically restricted manner.

A third cluster of work has been arranged under the heading of land use planning. Within this category is some work that conforms to the narrower definition of the field, on for instance, the ways in which various mapping exercises were deployed to increase rural production (Roche, 1990a), through to a book length treatment of soil and water administration in New Zealand to 1988 (Roche, 1994). Two other pieces of work instead explore the urban in

terms of the planning and design of public spaces in small town New Zealand. This forms a bridge to other urban focussed historico-geographical research relating to housing.

The urban environment has been comparatively neglected by historical geographers in New Zealand, something I have been conscious of more particularly with regard to teaching a course on New Zealand's historical geography. While my work on housing in a small way serves to redress the over attention given to the rural, this was not the entire or even major motivation for such work. Thinking about the timber industry in commodity chain terms, for instance, raised some questions about what were the end uses of indigenous timbers such as rimu. My forest history research had revealed the tensions between post World War Two housing construction policy and forest policy over cutting rates. While that topic still merits some closer study, further reading suggested that the role of the state in housing provision prior to the large scale efforts of the first Labour government in the 1930s had also been overlooked or dismissed by historical geographers (Hargreaves et al., 1985). Accordingly, I have focussed more closely on the *Workers Dwelling Act, 1905* under which some 700 houses were built and the Railways Department housing scheme which provided over 1200 mass produced houses for its own staff prior to the factory being closed in 1929. Mimicking the approach adopted for discharged soldier settlement (see Theme Four), I have done considerable archival research at the settlement scale, sometimes down to the individual houses and have undertaken fieldwork to examine surviving houses. Again, this is at variance with some of the more high level political and larger scale analysis of other researchers, including Ferguson (1994) which otherwise has still not really been surpassed as a general historical overview of housing in New Zealand. On the basis of my more detailed microscale work, I have argued that the importance of these two early state efforts transcends the comparatively small numbers of houses constructed and lies in the way in which they provided some of the ingredients out of which the Labour government after 1935 could

select a mix of ideas and practices for its own large state housing programme (Roche, 2010).

1.4 Geographies of World War One Soldier Settlement

Another of my longer term research projects has centred on society and environment in New Zealand particularly during the interwar period. A special focus here sufficient to be treated separately has been the discharged soldier settlement scheme. Popular mythology has tended to highlight ex-soldiers 'walking off' the land and the scheme was dismissed by two generations of historians as a failure.

There was an element of serendipity about my first engagement with this topic in the early 2000s, which arose from having visited what was formerly my Great Grandfather's farm and stemmed from curiosity about the status of neighbouring land labelled on a cadastral map as 'New Park Settlement.' This, I eventually ascertained was a World War One discharged soldier settlement. Somewhat earlier, geographer Kenneth Cumberland in *Landmarks* (1981) had painted a particularly damning picture of the World War One soldier resettlement scheme as having failed completely, particularly because of lack of settler knowledge about the environment and falling export prices. His focus was on the bushland farms of the upper Whanganui River where fern and scrub regrowth and isolation was a problem. This raised some immediate questions for me as the types of farms, farming experiences and issues that Cumberland was concerned with did not seem particularly relevant for soldier settlements such as New Park Settlement. In this respect Powell (1971) provided some assistance, though his account was oriented towards regional comparisons. Meanwhile, Massey University history PhD student Ashley Gould had worked towards a revisionist account of the farm settlement scheme as being something less than the total failure that it had been described as by two generations of historians (Gould, 1992, 1992a).

In this instance I have not arranged my work in a strictly chronological order but in a way that reveals how I became engaged with this topic moving from a number of case studies towards a more general statement about different types of failure under the scheme and finally to an international comparison of the literatures of equivalent schemes throughout the British Empire. This also serves to emphasise that my research strategy differed somewhat from that of the historians, geographers, and others who had worked on the farm settlement scheme in previous years. It was less concerned with the 'high politics' of soldier settlement, the successive legislative amendments and the exchanges between the Returned Soldiers Association and government, than with providing a 'bottom up' scrutiny of the scheme by studying individual farm settlements.

My research strategy also involved visits to former soldier settlements and, in some instances, interviews with descendants and access to family documents and old photographs. This approach further set the research project apart from some of politically oriented historical writing on this topic. On the other hand the close attention paid to the surviving documents also distinguished the project from Cumberland's approach which relied on fieldwork and secondary sources. Given the scale of the scheme with over 10,000 men and at least one woman balloting for land from 1916 to around 1925, I concentrated on gathering material on a range of soldier settlement farm types from across the country, as well as looking in more detail at the Canterbury and Wellington Land Districts. These were two regions where there were large numbers of soldier settlement farms, but with the former being regarded in official reports of the period as 'successful' and the latter as having mainly 'failures'. As well as considering the economic and social dimensions of 'failure' and 'success' considerable attention was paid, following Cumberland, to the environmental conditions under which farming was attempted. Away from the bush frontier farms inside the margins of settlement, the soldier farms still faced environmental problems but these were more subtle and more microscale than

those highlighted by Cumberland, but were nevertheless locally important as the work on Coldstream soldier settlement revealed (Roche, 2003).

When it came to writing up some of the research, a case study approach was adopted. Perhaps inevitably this method encountered some opposition from those who mistakenly believed the purpose was 'statistical generalisation' about the scheme rather than 'theoretical generalisation' (Baxter, 2016). When the project commenced the surviving files at Archives New Zealand were accessible only by scrutinising series lists. From these it was clear that the files were typically remarkably incomplete and for many settlements no files seemed to have survived. The introduction of electronic searching of the holdings via 'Archway' made it easier to more systematically search the (mainly) Lands Department files during the latter part of the project.

The initial results of the research work suggest some new interpretations of the soldier settlement scheme and may be summarized as follows;

That the state went to considerable lengths to keep soldier farmers in place by debt restructuring, revaluation to adjust rents, and writing off of some debt to a degree that is at odds with the popular myth of droves of men 'walking off' the land.

That where farms were of uneconomic size, accentuated by serious price falls for primary produce exports in the 1920s and early 1930s, properties were amalgamated to create economic units in order to save the farms.

That a focus on 'saving the farmers', essentially an historical focus, may be contrasted with 'saving the farms' which had a geographical focus and that the latter had been comparatively overlooked. However, this boundary was not rigidly observed within disciplines and some

geographers were sensitive to the plight of individual farmers' while some historians had considered farm settlement conditions.

Subsequent research pointed to a broader understanding of the multi-layered nature of 'failure' which for officials resided in the inability of selected individuals to survive as farmers. The limitations of the scheme, particularly the pegging of rental values to the artificially high 1916 valuations, were revealed in the problems posed by uneconomically small properties when farm export prices fell in early 1920s after the end of 'the Commandeer', the wartime bulk purchase agreements with the Imperial government, and lastly as the scheme faltered, along with the rest of the New Zealand's rural economy under the impact of the Great Depression (Roche, 2008a). Although I have not written in detail about 'success', a related typology of 'success' can be constructed at individual and farmer levels and in terms of prospering under broader economic conditions. One thing that emerged quite clearly out of the New Zealand farm level work was that the notion of 'persistence' – simply measuring the number of years the original soldier settler remained on the farm, and using this as a measure of success, is misleading in the extreme.

Having undertaken a considerable amount of farm level archival research, I only later decided to extend the scope of the project beyond its initial agricultural historical geography concerns, to scrutinize the political rhetoric surrounding it from inception to the late 1920s (Roche, 2005b). In this way some stronger connections can be made between the scheme and ideas of empire as well as of an emerging sense of separate New Zealand identity within the empire. This work also showed how the bush frontier was represented as the new battle front, where it was thought that repatriated soldiers could re-enter the post war world through the efforts of their own hard labour.

In 2011, I accepted an invitation to write a review of the various Commonwealth soldier settlement schemes for *History Compass*. This provided an opportunity to review a generation of work, mainly by historians and

historical geographers, from three or more countries engaging with some similar research questions, drawing on somewhat different sorts of archival materials, but all working in environments where the prevailing view of the national soldier settlement scheme was one of failure. As a comparative exercise, this paper pointed to the similarity of the ranges of problems and official responses. It also enabled the New Zealand experience of soldier settlement failure to be positioned arguably somewhere behind most of the Australian states and Canada (Roche, 2011). I was surprised and delighted to discover that this paper was the third most downloaded of those published by *History Compass* in the following 12 months.

1.5 Contemporary Agri-food/Forestry Studies

While quite consistently self-identifying as an historical geographer, I have also been engaged in other research that had, at the time it was written, a contemporary orientation. This research, largely undertaken collaboratively and some of it supported by external grants from the then Social Sciences Research Fund and more latterly the Marsden Fund divides into clusters looking at forestry, pastoral agriculture and pipfruit initially from a political economy and later post structural viewpoints. The irony of now labelling this body of research as 'contemporary', is not lost on me, neither is historical geographer Gordon Winder's (2009, 157) observation that, 'after all the twentieth century is history', though it can be added that serendipitously my research undertaken in New Zealand in the 1980s and 1990s now serves as a window onto an era of unprecedented Neo-liberal experimentation.

To some extent the contemporary forestry research was a 'bringing up to the present' of historical work on the state forestry sector in New Zealand, though not entirely so for it involved a greater engagement with corporate forestry and

also importantly the incorporation, into the research, of new conceptual frameworks initially of a political economy flavour (e.g. Roche, 1996).

The agriculture strand of the research was marked by efforts to reconsider what a political economy of agriculture might look like, particularly from an Antipodean perspective. At that time the political economy research that was emerging in Anglo-American geography tended to be narrated in a manufacturing and industrial context and there was something of a gap between the theoretical and the empirical elements of published papers. In response to this situation some of the pressing theoretical concerns of political economy of agriculture researchers were explored in a theoretically informed way with respect to commodity production chains, pluriactivity, subsumption, and food regimes theory (Roche, et al., 1992; Roche, 1996; 2012). This work programme is also an instance of contemporary work triggering an interest in the historical geography of agriculture exemplified by the research on the meat industry with regards to commodity chains and food regimes.

In the early 2000s I was privileged to write the annual reviews on rural geography for *Progress in Human Geography*, at that point in time, only the third New Zealand geographer to have done so, though the more important point was that the journal was inviting a viewpoint on rural geography that was not situated in the metropole (Roche, 2002, 2003a, 2005b). Although the word limit was very tight at around 3000 words, I took this opportunity to widen the scope of rural geography being reported on to beyond the UK and Western Europe – *Progress in Human Geography* did, after all, claim it was an international journal. This was admittedly only a gentle challenge to Metropolitan Theory as it applied to rural geography, but the three review essays were also intended selectively to globalise the reach of rural geography and to build bridges between rural geography and allied rural studies researchers particularly rural sociologists.

Pipfruit studies also occupied much of the mid-1990s to early 2000s period. This line of inquiry was a consequence of the proximity of the large pipfruit growing industry in Hawkes Bay and the comparative lack of research on it compared to pastoral farming. Again this work was largely collaborative and explored issues to do with sustainability, food regimes, global-local considerations and comparative approaches to studying apple growing internationally (Le Heron and Roche, 1996; Roche et al., 1999). A joint paper published in *Area* that tried to bring together sustainability ideas and Third Food Regimes characteristics was perhaps the boldest statement from this body of work (Le Heron and Roche, 1995). An Australian expert on food regimes, Bill Pritchard (2009) described this paper as 'an influential 1995 article.'

Subsequent work by food regime pioneers Philip McMichael and Harriet Friedmann in their reconceptualization of the contemporary (Third?) food regime as a Corporate Food Regime and a Corporate Environmental Food Regime respectively revalidates some of the original propositions (Friedland, 2005, McMichael, 2005).

Current research, as part of the Marsden Funded Biological Economies Project has a different trajectory and has instead used assemblage ideas to position innovation in the meat sector. These have a post structural rather than a political economy perspective (Henry and Roche, 2013; 2016).

Both the pastoral agriculture and pipfruit work contributed in a theoretically informed way to the development of a quite distinctive Australasian political economy of agriculture, that gathered further momentum through involvement in and hosting of Agrifood Network meetings (e.g. Palmerston North, 2001 and 2012) including academics and practitioners from a range of social science disciplines.

This body of work on agrifood and forestry topics has also been largely developed in the context of several collaborative projects, including Massey University Post-Doctoral Fellowships, the Social Science Research Fund supported 'Transformations in Land Based Production' project, the BRCSS funded 'Biological Economy' project and as an Assistant investigator on the Marsden Funded 'Biological Economies project' 2009 to 2012). While joint research work is perfectly valid and may even be a necessary way to advance various social science research projects at this present time, it is perhaps a little problematic when submitting work for a higher doctorate, especially if your own contributions are spread throughout a larger piece of text. Accordingly, I have only brought forward a fraction of the work published on agrifood and forestry and these are ones where I feel I confident that I have been able make a significant contiguous contribution to the article or chapter. That said the order of authorship can be read as a proxy for the comparative contribution.

1.6 Histories of Geographic Thought

There has been little systematic research done on the history of geographic thought in New Zealand, notwithstanding the two comprehensive theses by Gorrie (1955) and Hammond (1992), entries on George Jobberns in *Geographers Biobibliographical Studies* and the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (Johnston, 1981, Soons, 1998) and commentaries on particular episodes (e.g. Moran, 2000). As a PhD student in the Department of Geography at the University of Canterbury, I had access to the 'Jobberns Room' and was vaguely aware of his standing as the first Professor of Geography in the New Zealand university system and that Canterbury was the oldest Geography department. Attending the 50th celebrations in 1987 and reading the anniversary booklet (Macaulay, 1987) and the stock-taking essays on half a century of New Zealand Geography in *Southern Approaches* (Holland and Johnston, 1987) perhaps sparked an interest in geographic thought.

Participation in the International Geographical Union Congress in Sydney in 1988 also meant that I attended some sessions organised by the Commission on the History of Geographic Thought about early figures in British and European geography, though the interest remained latent for some time. Geographic thought was not something I had been directly exposed to as a student, although such a course was compulsory for those proceeding to postgraduate geography when I joined Massey University in 1983.

Andrew Clark, whose work I was introduced to as a post graduate, through his *Invasion of New Zealand by People Plants and Animals* (Clark, 1949) had provided something of a bridge for me between historical geography and geographic thought. My first foray into the field was, however, via study of textbooks, triggered by a belated appreciation of the value of Harvey Franklin's *Trade Growth and Anxiety* (1978), by then out of print. One consequence was an involvement in series of discussions spearheaded by Richard Le Heron that eventually lead to the publication of a local jointly authored local text book *Explorations in Human Geography: Encountering Place* (Le Heron et al., 1999), to which I contributed an historical geography chapter which distilled some of my research into forestry and agriculture (Roche, 1999). For me this also reinforced some earlier questions about what were the predecessor textbooks both university and secondary school and what sort of geography it was that they had articulated. This led to a study of geologist-geographer Patrick Marshall's *Geography of New Zealand*, a book that went through numerous editions from 1905 into the 1920s, before Jobberns produced his own *Whitcomb's Regional Geography of the World*. This exercise pointed to both the presence of deterministic thinking in early textbooks and the extent to which the geography of New Zealand was organized within a regional framework originally borrowed from UK geography.

Subsequent research in this field has tended to take on a stronger biobibliographical dimension and been concerned with particular individuals and how they have grappled with geographical ideas in a New Zealand setting.

To date this has involved studies of self-declared geographers who became Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society (FRGS) such as mid-nineteenth century New Zealand explorer surveyor JT Thomson and Frances Lysnar who was amongst the first group of fellows, and the only one in Australasia, to be elected when women were readmitted as FRGS in 1913. Other geographical work has considered text book writing in the 1930s by George Jobberns and research on Andrew Clark who became a significant international figure in historical geography (Gibson, 1978). It also includes a reassessment of the work of Kenneth Cumberland, who was hired from the UK to teach at Canterbury, and founded the Auckland department in 1946, from which he retired as Professor in 1978 to complete his television series Landmarks (Roche, 2012a; 2013). A biographical dimension is helpful in that some of the founding appointees were individuals who held strong and contrary opinions about the future direction of the discipline. Under these circumstances professional differences could sometimes did become personal differences.

My work on George Jobberns and text books, on Cumberland and his methodological approaches to geography and the types of topics he studied, as well as Andrew Clark's thoughts about geographical change, points to the extent to which university geography in New Zealand in its formative decades was an amalgam of ideas and personnel from both the US and the UK. Cumberland produced papers that drew on Carl Sauer and (Sir) Clifford Darby's ideas adjusted to New Zealand conditions. But New Zealand as a location also impacted on Clark's thinking; that he was in a country that had experienced dramatic environmental change over the previous century, I have suggested, makes his engagement with the issues of studying geographical change over time a straightforward enough choice, but an approach he did not persist with in North America under the combined influences of his Wisconsin colleague Richard Hartshorne's ideas about historical geography and the continental landscapes, long occupied by humans, in which he again found himself (Roche, 2013).

1.7 Changing Research Environments

Before the onset of the PBRF 'encouraged' university staff to become much more focussed and systematic about their research it was not unusual for one-off papers to appear on a CV, and some of which have continued to be cited over the years (e.g. Berg and Roche, 1997). From this cluster, I offer a small selection of papers that do share some connections here labelled 'Changing Research Environments' though to some extent this gives them an artificial sense of unity in that they were not produced as a part of a coordinated research programme. These three were produced in response to some contemporary changes, often abrupt changes in New Zealand society during the 1990s. Looking back it might be observed, they were written during the period when the Neo-Liberal 'reforms' of the mid 1980s were becoming more firmly entrenched and their impact on the university and on the research environment was beginning to be felt.

1.8 Conclusion

The pieces of research presented in the thesis range across 30 years, span a number of topics both historical and contemporary, draws on a number of theoretically informed viewpoints and generally offers a reasonably rich empirical account. Some of these research interests have been sustained for 30 years, others are of a more recent or fleeting nature. The historically oriented work has been sole-authored while the contemporary agrifood work is largely collaborative in nature. It would be misleading however, to position all my historical geography writing as standalone efforts for, although sole authored, a number of these pieces of work have been collaborative in the sense that they emerged out of special session conference presentations and other cooperative symposium and or were parts of edited book projects or special issues of journals including the *Historical Atlas of New Zealand*, *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, *Comparing Apples, Oranges, and Cotton: Environmental*

Histories of the Global Plantation, and a special issue of the *New Zealand Geographer* on biography and autobiography in New Zealand Geography. That it is sole authored reflects a combination of individual research interests, institutional circumstance, the small numbers of researchers in the area, and archival research as a solitary affair.

A former colleague recently posed a question about considering the impact of one's work in a field against what that literature would look like if you had written nothing at all. Obviously this is a question that it is impossible to answer accurately or dispassionately, but looking back I would argue that the agrifood/forestry literature from New Zealand because it was a collaborative research project, would still have developed and an impact in my absence. Some Food Regimes ideas, however, would not have been developed as far, the temporal span of some of the work would have been more 'presentist', and the forestry thread in its entirety would have been correspondingly less developed. The historical geography literature would still be rich and diverse and have engaged with historians through the portal of environmental history, though there would be a sizable gap to be filled around landscape transformation, deforestation, state forestry, afforestation, and some of the key actors involved. My revisionist interpretation of the achievement of the Discharged Soldier Settlement Act to being one of failures and successes would seem to be unlikely to have taken place. Finally, in terms of geographic thought, this area would probably have not been at all explored in the New Zealand context, potentially at least making it more difficult for geographers to understand some fundamental aspects of the condition of the discipline in New Zealand.

Much of the historical geography writing has been depended on a familiarity with archival sources and in many cases represents a first attempt to make sense of the past in historico-geographical terms. In areas where there is now some secondary literature, I have also endeavoured to add to debates in this literature, most notably in terms of taking a revisionist view of the failure of the soldier settlement scheme.

The agrifood work is more equally balanced between theoretically informed and empirically rich description as well as engagement with debates in the international literature and has largely been undertaken collaboratively with joint authorship the norm. Bringing all this work together also makes me aware of two features of the work of which I have not been especially conscious but which I see as marking my research. One of these is, having a sustained interest in human agency which has not always been in vogue in geography and the other, not unrelated to the first is a tendency in recent decades to undertake work at a smaller scale, one that makes sense in terms of individuals. The suite of work submitted here and the approaches adopted to produce it have generated both fresh and revisionist understandings of the way in which land use has been transformed as part of a succession of changes in agriculture and forestry. In turn these efforts have revealed something of the far reaching collective and cumulative impacts and historical limits of such actions.

Historical geography still possesses a capacity to inform theoretical and conceptual advances in geography more generally. In my case I would suggest this rests on the creation of a sizable body of work to do with the social transformation of the New Zealand environment in the past and into the present.

1.9 List of submitted books, chapters and papers

Theme 1: Historical Geography

1. 2008. 'Historical Geography in New Zealand, 1987-2007'. *History Compass*, 6, 1037-1065.
2. 2010. 'Historical Research and Archival Sources', In Hay, I. (ed.) *Qualitative Methods in Human Geography*, Oxford University Press, Don Mills, Ontario, pp. 173-190.
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Theme 2: Forest History

Timber Industry

4. 2008. 'The Commodity Chain at the Periphery – The Spar Trade of Northern New Zealand in the early 19th Century.' In Stringer C. and Le Heron, R. (eds.) *Agri-Food Commodity Chains and Globalising Networks*, Ashgate, Aldershot, pp. 201-214.
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6. 1990. 'The New Zealand Timber Economy 1840 to 1935'. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 16, 295-313.
7. 1997. 'From Forest to Pasture'. Plate 47 In McKinnon M, (ed.) *Historical Atlas of New Zealand*. David Bateman, Auckland.

Forest Policy and Management

8. 2010. 'David Hutchins in Australia 1914-1915: the penultimate chapter in the career of an Imperial forester'. *Historical Records of Australian Science*, 21, 165-180.
9. 2010. 'Colonial Forestry at its Limits: The Latter day career of Sir David Hutchins in New Zealand 1915-1920'. *Environment and History* 16, 431-454.
10. 2005. 'Sir David Hutchins and kauri in New Zealand'. In Dargavel J. (ed.), *Australia and New Zealand Forest Histories: Araucarian Forests*. Australian Forest History Society Inc., Canberra (Occasional Publication No.2), pp. 33-39.
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- 20.** 2009. 'The Tung Oil Boom in Australasia: a network perspective'. *Geographical Research*, 47, 256-268.
- 21.** 1990. 'Exotic Conservation and Exotic Utilisation'. Chapter 5. *History of New Zealand Forestry*. GP Print, Wellington, pp. 266-324.
- 22.** 1990. 'The Second Planting Boom, Restructuring and the Internationalisation of New Zealand Forestry 1960-1987'. Chapter 6. *History of New Zealand Forestry*. GP Print, Wellington, pp. 325-400.

Biography

- 23.** 1993. 'Robert Holt 1832-1909'. *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Vol. 2. Bridget Williams Books, Wellington. pp. 227-228.
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Theme 3: Historical Geographies of World War One Discharged Soldier Settlement

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31. 2008. 'Farm amalgamation: A strategy for saving soldier settlements in New Zealand during the 1920s and 1930s'. *British Review of New Zealand Studies*, 17, 67-94.
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36. 2011. 'World War One British Empire Discharged Soldier Settlement: Orthodoxy and Revisionism in Overview. *History Compass*, 9, 1-15.

Theme 4: Colonial and Dominions Society & Environment

Pipfruit

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Frozen Meat Industry

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Land Use Planning

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43. 2016 'Lands for Settlement, Forests, and Scenic Reserves: Nature and Value in New Zealand, 1890s-1920s'. In Winder, G. and Dix, A. (eds.) *Trading Environments, Frontiers, Commercial Knowledge, and Environmental Transformation, 1750-1990*. Routledge, New York. pp. 138-165.

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Housing

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Theme 6: Contemporary Agri-food and Forestry Studies

Forestry

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55. 2001. Wilkinson, R. Roche, M. Krause, M. and Smith, W. 'Food or forest? Contested Landuse in Wairoa District, New Zealand'. In Lockie, S. and Pritchard, B. (eds.) *Consuming Foods, sustaining Environments*, Central Queensland University, Rockhampton. pp. 110-124.

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Agriculture

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Theme 7: Histories of Geographic Thought in New Zealand

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Theme 8: Changing Research Environments

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