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Anthropologica

WOMEN IN THE FISHERIES

Edited with an Introduction by Karen Szala-Meneok

MARION PRATT	Useful Disasters: The Complexity of Response to Stress in a Tropical Lake Ecosystem
MODESTA MÉDARD and DOUGLAS C. WILSON	Changing Economic Problems for Women in the Nile Perch Fishing Communities on Lake Victoria
LEONIE STELLA	No Place for Wimps: Working on Western Australian Trawlers
MARIAN BINKLEY	Nova Scotian Fishing Families Coping with the Fisheries Crisis
MADELEINE HALL-ARBER	Hear Me Speak: Italian and Portuguese Women Facing Fisheries Management
KAREN SZALA-MENEOK and KARA McINTOSH	Craft Development and Development through Crafts: Adaptive Strategies of Labrador Women in a Changing Fishery
UNNUR DÍS SKAPTADÓTTIR	Gender Construction and Diversity in Icelandic Fishing Communities

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ANTHROPOLOGICA: A MERGER OF TWO CANADIAN JOURNALS

In 1998, *Anthropologica* and *Culture* will merge. The name "*Anthropologica*" will be retained, but the journal will have a cover and layout similar to that of *Culture*. Ownership of *Anthropologica* will pass from Wilfrid Laurier University to CASCA (Canadian Anthropology Society/Société canadienne d'anthropologie) However, Wilfrid Laurier University Press will continue to publish the journal and will run a subscription service for CASCA.

The reasons for this merger are simple. The editors of both journals and the officers of CASCA felt that the combined circulation of the two journals would ensure that one strong, viable publication would continue to represent our discipline in Canada. As many of you know, funding for scholarly journals has been greatly reduced in Canada as well as in other countries. These cutbacks have increased the workload of editorial staff, and have made it much more difficult to direct and publish journals, particularly those in the smaller academic fields. We have therefore taken firm but necessary pre-emptive action to ensure that scholars inside and outside Canada will continue to receive a journal that will represent Canadian anthropology at its best.

The final issue of *Culture* (1997) has just been mailed. The schedule for *Anthropologica* ("new" and "old") is as follows:

- *Anthropologica* (1997, double issue)—to be mailed in May 1998;
- *Anthropologica*, Journal of the Canadian Anthropological Society/Société canadienne d'anthropologie (Vol. XL, Nos. 1 and 2) to be mailed in the second half of 1998.

The 1997 *Anthropologica* will be mailed to subscribers to both journals, and may contain a few articles submitted by the editorial staff of *Culture* as well as several submitted to *Anthropologica*. Its layout will be similar to *Culture*'s.

The new editors of *Anthropologica* will be Jean-Guy Goulet (Université St. Paul, Ottawa) who will act both as Francophone Editor and Editor-in-Chief and Sally Cole (Concordia) who will be Anglophone Editor. They replace Christine Jourdan (Concordia) and Bruce Miller (UBC) whose terms as editors of *Culture* have expired. They also replace the senior editorial équipe of *Anthropologica*. Some of the editors of the "old" *Anthropologica*, namely, Andrew Lyons (Wilfrid Laurier), Harriet Lyons (Waterloo), Stanley Barrett (Guelph), Sam Migliore (University College of Cape Breton) and Karen Szala-Meneok (Wilfrid Laurier) will join the Board of the combined journal. Andrew Lyons will relinquish his de facto role as Chief Editor of *Anthropo-*

logica, but will continue as Managing Editor for the transition period ending in May 1999.

The new *Anthropologica* will contain twice as much material as the "old" *Anthropologica*. Consequently, there will be an increase in the cost of the journal for the first time in more than six years. The new rates are based on the 1997 rates for *Culture*.

Subscription rates for 1998 will be as follows:

$ 75.00	Professional members of CASCA
$100.00	Sustaining members of CASCA
$120.00	Family membership (two members in same household)
$ 25.00	Student, retired and unwaged
$ 85.00	Institutions in Canada
$ 85.00	Institutions in O.E.C.D. countries
$ 40.00	Institutions in non-O.E.C.D. countries

All prices in U.S. funds outside Canada.

This new venture represents in many ways a happy ending to a long saga. *Anthropologica*, Canada's oldest scholarly journal in anthropology, was originally edited and produced at Université St. Paul. In 1998, for the first time in 15 years, it will have an editor who works for that institution. After a period of crisis in 1983, Kathryn Molohon (Laurentian) did much to revive the journal. When ownership of the journal was passed to Wilfrid Laurier, WLU Press provided expertise and a training in journal management to its editorial team (Mat Guenther, Andrew and Harriet Lyons). They also produced an attractive journal at low cost. These services are now offered to members of CASCA and to the new editorial board.

During the last 15 years, *Culture* as CASCA's journal has acquired a strong national and international reputation. The departing editors (Christine Jourdan and Bruce Miller) have strengthened the foundations laid by many previous editors including Margaret Anderson, Peter Stephenson, Jean-Claude Muller, Bernard Arcand, Louise Paradis, Leland Donald, Carmen Lambert and Denyse Helly. Although the name *Culture* will not survive, its distinctive format will be retained and a stronger *Anthropologica* will now be CASCA's journal. We trust that you will enjoy the "new" *Anthropologica*, an international scholarly journal that will publish some of the best writing in our discipline.

Andrew P. Lyons (Managing Editor)

INTRODUCTION

Karen Szala-Meneok
Wilfrid Laurier University

In 1988, Jane Nadel-Klein and Dona Lee Davis gave social scientists studying fishing societies an important collection of essays entitled *To Work and to Weep: Women in Fishing Economies*, served up a bounty of ethnographies about women in 11 coastal communities across the globe and situated those ethnographies within the context of existing research on gender in maritime societies. The articles that appear in this issue of *Anthropologica* have been enriched by the contributors of *To Work and to Weep*. We have endeavoured to build upon their insights into the social construction of gender in fishing economies and have continued to explore the nature of the social relations of production and reproduction of culture.

This special issue of *Anthropologica* had its origins in a double symposium entitled "Women in the Fishery," organized by Marian Binkley for the 1996 meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology held in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A. The presenters focussed on women in fishing economies in Nova Scotia, Labrador, New England, Iceland, Newfoundland, Australia and Tanzania. The symposium was well attended and a strong participant interest was expressed that we "do something" about getting these papers published—hence this special issue. An overarching theme reflected explicitly or implicitly in each of the contributions is the profound change that is occurring in fisheries worldwide and the impact of stock depletion locally and globally. Other themes apparent in these articles are: women as a single group in relation to men, women as members of diverse sub-groups, women responding like men, though not necessarily in the same ways as men, to ecological or policy stresses/crises, and the dialogue between women and men as they define themselves in relation to each other and changing fisheries.

Skaptadóttir's article opens the collection with an important reminder from Nadel-Klein and Davis (1988) that when we study women, whether they are in fishing communities or in other cultural settings, it is critical that we consider what they have in common and what differentiates them from other women. In Icelandic fishing communities, women are coping with situations similar to those of women in other North Atlantic fisheries. Declines in fish stocks,

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greater involvement of women in shore-based operations and the transformation of gender boundaries between women and men are placed in sharp focus. What stands out in the Skaptadóttir article is the strong desire by men to maintain the traditional division of labour in village Iceland while at the same time enjoying the many consumer goods that are now commonplace in the lives of Northern Europeans. As a result, there is an expectation that women will continue to re-create the home in its modern embodiment, while maintaining the illusion of the traditional division of labour and the romanticized life-ways of these once isolated fishing villagers.

Like Labradorian women (see the article by Szala-Meneok and McIntosh), Icelandic women produce crafts, thereby preserving traditional domestic skills while contributing to the household budget. The modern home requires many more appointments that range from technologically complex machinery and gadgetry to fashionable furnishings. The introduction of such items necessarily implies new expenditures of household capital and female labour in household maintenance. In addition, Icelandic women are expected to acquire and fine-tune the skills required to carefully manage household finances as the fortunes of the fishery ebb and flow. This re-invention of the home reflects similar role expectations which women in Nova Scotia (Binkley), Labrador (Szala-Meneok and McIntosh) and in a different way in Western Australia (Stella) experience. The role of mate (in both the shipboard and marital senses), quartermaster, accountant and psycho-social animateur surface as recurrent themes throughout Skaptadóttir's work and in articles by other authors in this collection. Skaptadóttir also focusses on the important role of women as small-business managers in the contemporary Icelandic fishery which is now linked to a global network of fishery operations. She points out that the village serves as a lively arena in which the face-to-face interaction of daily life is played out, regardless of the economic realities of world fishery economics. Skaptadóttir's research echoes the work of other authors in this collection concerning the responsibilities of women in fishing economies. Such economies require not only skills on the home front, as families and households interact with each other, but also the ability to communicate with other locales, even with the world at large.

In Stella's article on gender relationships in the Western Australian luxury seafoods industry we are given the opportunity to explore and transcend the kind of discriminatory attitude often manifested toward women who work aboard fishing vessels. In many parts of the world, a woman's presence aboard ship is associated with concerns about luck in the contingent world of fishing. In this article, we are introduced to the culture of Australian trawler fishing vessels where catch phrases such as "No wimps here" and "Go hard or go home" capture the prevailing ethos of *machismo*. Stella's female and male informants expose the harassment and double standard that most women meet

when they try to integrate themselves into the male-dominated world of boat crews. This paper provides a glimpse of the timbers that support the symbolic construction of shipboard community. The life of male crew members is characterized by excessive risk taking, harsh working conditions and competition. Many male crew members seem to bask in unnecessarily adverse circumstances. Their remuneration is manifest in the currency of "rugged" maleness that is routinely tested by adversities they willfully neglect to remedy. Female crew members probably experience even higher levels of harassment, personal risks and severe working conditions because of their gender. However, women's presence aboard ship is as much a challenge to the carefully constructed world of fishing as it is a theatrical dividend when male crew act out the drama of "fisherman as he-man." With women aboard, the exaggerated risks men help perpetuate can be further magnified. Still the more traditional division of labour, where women are cooks and outfitters of the crew, remains intact.

The two articles by Pratt and by Médard and Wilson also focus on women who are making their way into the previously male preserve of fishing on Lake Victoria in Tanzania. In addition, these two East African studies also represent the expansion of research to include not only seaboard fishing economies but also those in riverine and lake locales. Pratt reports on the impact of the introduction of a new fish species—Nile perch—to Lake Victoria. The decrease in biodiversity and the threat to other merchantable fish species are among the outcomes of the introduction of these perch. Pratt argues, however, that environmental perturbations such as these can be "useful disasters," because they serve as dynamic forces that can institute change. Pratt's article records how the women and men in this region have had to rely on a broad range of skills developed in both fishing and agricultural settings to devise ways of responding to the multiple perturbations that have arisen in ecological, social economic and social contexts. As is the case with the Australian women in Stella's article, new economic and political realities in the broader society and changes in the fishery have created a precarious state for women who have only recently begun to take a more prominent role in both the fishing and selling of Nile perch.

Médard and Wilson's examination of the impact of the introduction of Nile perch to Lake Victoria suggests that as the environment of the region undergoes rapid changes, new institutions emerge. These changes also influence the roles that gender plays. Médard and Wilson have observed how female entrepreneurs have attained access to venture capital and how women and men negotiate the use of household wealth and the allocation of women's labour. The Lake Victoria fishery continues to expand in response to world demand for perch. In this process, traditional institutions are faced with new kinds of risks.

However, equally new strategies for addressing these risks are making their way into community life as well.

The Nova Scotian fishing households, discussed by Binkley, are living through a difficult transition period as they face the crises currently affecting the off-shore fishery. The challenges which fishermen's spouses face require them to develop new strategies both to overcome hardships and to cope with even greater levels of risk and psychological stress in their work and family lives. Strategies that were once effective for women and men are no longer viable. Binkley reports that in many instances women are adjusting to the crises more rapidly and creatively than men. This is a condition reported for Labrador by Szala-Meneok and McIntosh, and for Lake Victoria by Pratt and by Médard and Wilson.

Hall-Arber's article explores the roles of women associated with the commercial off-shore fisheries of New Bedford and Gloucester, Massachusetts. For the largely Portuguese fishing community of New Bedford and the largely Italian community of Gloucester women's work on shore in both fishing and community settings is essential. In both communities, women work in a variety of fishery-related jobs. These range from processing-plant positions to running family businesses or working as office staff for fishing companies. Women are also stakeholders in the fishery because of their familial ties to it. In both communities, women's most frequent forum for expressing their interests and those of their families is through wives' associations. Gloucester and New Bedford women, however, use their wives' associations in ways that reflect not only the distinct histories of these two fisheries, but the gender models ensconced within the ethos of Italian and Portuguese cultures. Hall-Arber explores how two communities gain and retain their "voice" amid serious changes influencing their respective fishing industries.

Szala-Meneok and McIntosh probe craft production as one of a constellation of adaptive strategies that women in coastal Labrador employ to mitigate the contingent nature of fishing, hunting and trapping. Their research reveals that an important factor in making craft production more lucrative, as the fishery declines, is to approach craft development schemes proactively and to accept that risk taking is part of entrepreneurship. Szala-Meneok and McIntosh show that risk taking has always been a successful strategy in coastal Labrador. Despite this tradition, the type of risk taking typical of successful entrepreneurs in more urban contexts continues to be viewed with scepticism even as the future of fishing remains bleak. Their article provides a view of a fishing society currently facing the prospective loss not only of its sustenance but also of its way of life. In Labrador, where fewer alternative species are available, the scenario which threatens so many other fishing economies is already becoming a reality.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the help of a group of people who assisted in the process of bringing out this special issue. First, I thank the contributors for their patience and commitment to the project and in meeting the many deadlines I set. On behalf of all the authors, I thank Marian Binkley for organizing the symposium at Baltimore and for facilitating the discussion of our work in a productive and congenial post-symposium setting. This proved vital in sustaining the enthusiasm for such a publishing project and for dealing with preliminary organizational matters. Andrew Lyons' and Harriet Lyons' valuable editorial contributions at *Anthropologica* are greatly appreciated as are those of Doreen Armbruster and other members of the editorial staff at Wilfrid Laurier Press. The anonymous reviewers, who with eagerness and good cheer, took on the daunting task of evaluating not one but a "package" of manuscripts are warmly thanked. Their promptness in meeting deadlines and their range of useful recommendations to the authors and to me made the task of organizing such an enterprise not only easier but altogether enjoyable. In addition, Marie Puddister of the Department of Geography at the University of Guelph ably executed two maps for the collection while Patricia Colton contributed her editorial abilities in the crafting of well-tempered sentences. The final acknowledgments are extended to those women and men in fishing communities throughout our field locales from Iceland to Australia who welcomed us as observers of and participants in their fishing world.

USEFUL DISASTERS: THE COMPLEXITY OF RESPONSE TO STRESS IN A TROPICAL LAKE ECOSYSTEM

Marion Pratt
American Association for the Advancement of Science

Abstract: The introduction of the Nile perch in the 1960s enhanced the economic value of the local fishery and encouraged women to become involved in fish processing and marketing. Over time, however, the predatory perch has severely reduced stocks of popular indigenous fishes. Currently, competition created by high foreign demand for the perch is forcing small-scale traders out of business and depriving local consumers of fish protein. Case studies reveal that the increased competition also has elicited various forms of production relations among men and women processors and traders. The complexities associated with the socio-ecology of this ecosystem hinder attempts to develop effective management policies.

Résumé: Dans les années soixantes, le fait d'avoir introduit la perche du Nile a rehaussé la valeur économique de la pêcherie locale et a encouragé les femmes à participer plus dans le traitement des poissons et dans le marketing. Toutefois, avec le temps, la perche, poisson prédateur, a considérablement réduit la quantité de poissons domestiques qui étaient prisés. Actuellement, la compétition créée par une forte demande étrangère pour la perche oblige les petits commerçants à fermer boutique, privant ainsi les consommateurs locaux d'une importante source de protéine de poisson. Des études de cas ont montré que l'augmentation de la compétition a aussi provoqué diverses relations entre les hommes et les femmes qui traitent le poisson et les commerçants. La complexité associée à la socio-écologie de cet écosystème empêche les tentatives de développement de bonnes politiques de gestion.

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Introduction

The introduction of the Nile perch (*Lates niloticus*) into Lake Victoria in the middle of this century has had far-reaching repercussions. To examine this phenomenon adequately requires a powerful analytical framework that combines both historical and processual ecological methods. Historical ecology as outlined by Schmidt (1994) seeks to identify ecological transformations induced by human cultural systems over time by analyzing the interplay of cultural systems with the physical environment. Processual ecological methods also serve to identify various mechanisms that link environment and behaviour by employing small and large units of analysis, dropping assumptions of equilibrium and balance and addressing processes of conflict and co-operation (Orlove 1980). Processual ecological anthropology examines the "interactions between the choices which actors make, behaviours on an individual or group level, and the biological and social systems which influence the distribution of resources, constrain the possible adaptive strategies and provide some of the goals which the actors attempt to meet" (Orlove 1980:257).

This article investigates a few of the complex relationships between the Lake Victoria ecosystem and the human populations that depend on its resources. It suggests that the development of useful resource management policies becomes problematic when the very patterns and dynamics of resource production and distribution are constantly undergoing changes that are incompletely understood and relatively unpredictable.

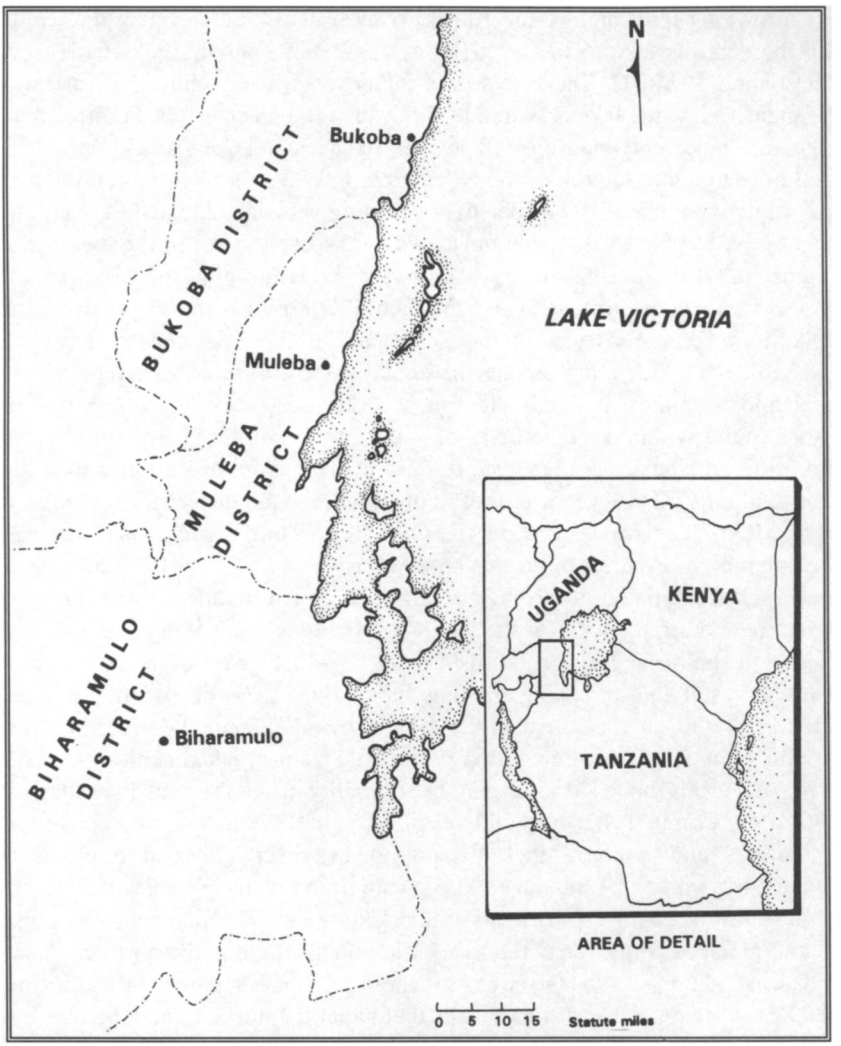
The Setting: Lake Victoria and Its Western Shore

Located mostly in the Kagera Region of Tanzania, the western shore of Lake Victoria consists of three main agro-ecological zones: a well-watered area stretching along the shore from Muleba and Biharamulo Districts north to the border with Uganda; a drier, flatter area located in Biharamulo District to the south; and a high plateau that stretches west toward the Ruwenzori mountains (see Figure 1). Seasonally heavy rainfall in the northwestern portion of the region has leached the soils of their nutrients over the millennia. Local farmers responded by painstakingly building up the land, using mulching techniques to nourish their plantations of plantains and coffee. The poor quality of the soil has also obliged many local women to look to off-farm activities for personal income generation.

The western shore is inhabited by Haya peoples in the north and Zinza—mixed with other groups—in the south. In pre-colonial and colonial times, the highly stratified, patriarchal Haya and Zinza societies were ruled by kings who maintained their control through a feudal, agropastoral system based on plantains and cattle. European colonization of East Africa at the turn of this century greatly diminished the power of these kings. The introduction of animal and human diseases, Western religions, new fish species and the cultivation of

coffee for export during the German and British rule strongly influenced the social and physical environments of the west lake region.

Figure 1
The Western Shore of Lake Victoria



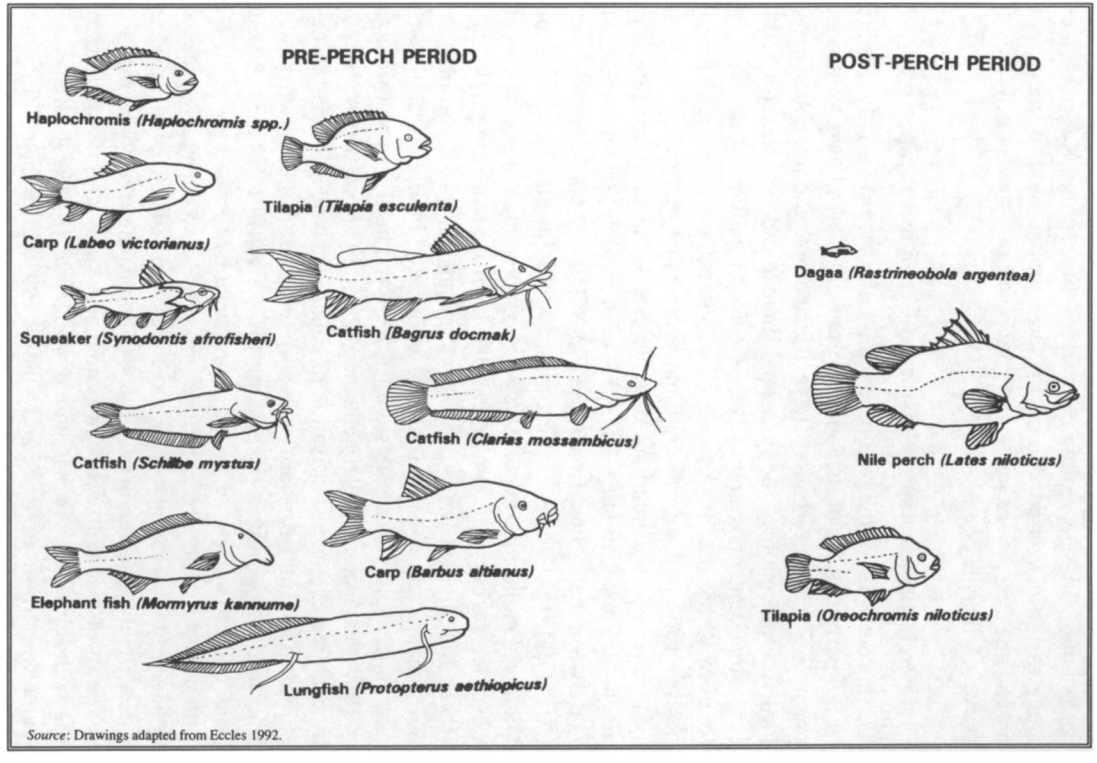
Perched on a plateau about 1128 metres above the Indian Ocean, Lake Victoria is the largest tropical lake in the world, approximately the same size as Ireland [between 26 200 and 26 828 square kilometres (EAHC 1953; Ford 1955)]. The lake shoreline, including dozens of islands, is about 4800 km long

(Graham 1929:53). With a maximum depth of 79 metres, Lake Victoria is the shallowest of the great Rift Valley lakes and thus the most potentially productive due to the annual overturn of its waters that circulates nutrient salts from the lower levels of the lake. Lake Victoria was created about 750 000 years ago by post-Miocene tectonic movements which formed the East African Rift Valley, drowning the Katonga and Kagera river systems and elevating the region that borders the lake to the west (Fryer 1972:462; Kendall 1969:164; Lowe-McConnell 1975:37). The lake's only outlet is via the Victoria Nile at Jinja, Uganda. Today, the lake is shared by Tanzania (48 percent of the surface area), Uganda (44 percent) and Kenya (8 percent) (Butcher and Colaris 1975:1).

Before the introduction of the Nile perch, Lake Victoria harboured the second highest number of fish species—including catfishes, lungfishes, cichlids, squeakers, elephant fishes, minnows and carp—of all lakes in the world (see Figure 2). Of these fishes, a large number of haplochromine species, the minnow *Rastrineobola argentea* and the cichlid *Tilapia esculenta* provided the bulk of fishermen's catch in the latter part of the 19th century (Swayne 1868:102). The variation among the cichlids, most of which are represented by haplochromines, in Lake Victoria was the greatest of any one group of fishes found within a single body of water in the world (Wilson 1992:108); 300 different species are believed to have evolved from one species over the course of only 12 000 years as a result of environmental disturbances (Johnson et al. 1996). The wide variation among haplochromine species has attracted the attention of fisheries biologists around the world (Ligtvoet 1989). The species are differentiated according to the shape of the mouth and the number, structure and arrangement of the teeth—adaptations to a variety of foods and feeding techniques. These small fishes, few of which grow larger than 15 cm, were harvested in astonishing amounts (up to 1800 kg/hour) before the introduction of the Nile perch into the lake (Lowe-McConnell 1975:134). Although some researchers claim that the small size of the haplochromines and their numerous bones diminished their quality as a food fish (Anderson 1961:196; Comte 1982; Reynolds et al. 1995), Haya people appreciate the "vitamins" and "protein" these fish provide as especially useful for pregnant and nursing women (Appleton 1993:62; data from my interviews with elders).

Generally speaking, fish stocks in the lake were most abundant along the southern and eastern shores, relatively less abundant along the northern shore and least abundant on the western shore (Graham 1929:116; Kollmann 1899:6). Strong southeast trade winds that batter the unsheltered length of the western shoreline for most of the year (Ford 1955:3; Graham 1929:63) hinder the west lake fishery by compromising the manoeuvrability of fishing, trading and transport vessels and by creating a coastline blanketed with wave-washed sand rather than the accumulated mud that is common along all other shores of the lake (Culwick and Culwick 1940:80; Ford 1955:40; Lowe-McConnell

Figure 2
Fish Species Abundant in Lake Victoria Before and After the Introduction of the Nile Perch



Source: Drawings adapted from Eccles 1992.

1975:127). Large populations of *Tilapia esculenta*, the most important food and trade fish of Lake Victoria in the pre-perch period, were found only in places sheltered enough to permit mud to accumulate (Graham 1929:117). Partly because low stocks of this important commercial species limited the scale and income-generating capacity of the northern Kagera fishery, women along the northwest portion of the shore, unlike other women in other areas around the lake, were not greatly involved in fisheries activities before the arrival of the Nile perch.

The Perch Introduction in Historical Ecological Perspective

The introduction of the Nile perch into Lake Victoria is only one in a long series of perturbations of the local environment which I term "episodic catastrophism." These perturbations have affected both the natural environment and local socio-economy. Many radical, human-induced transformations of the ecosystem and ecosystem-induced transformations of human populations (both of which may be considered socio-ecological events) have taken place here over the past several thousand years. Analyzed over time, this feedback system reveals the interplay of cultural systems with the physical environment—or the "historical ecology"—of the region (Schmidt 1994:100).

Between the earliest Iron Age (200 BC to AD 600) and the Late Iron Age (AD 1700 to 1900), the once vast, dense forests (comprised of *Miscanthidium*, *Entandrophragma*, *Uapaca*, *Syzgium* and many other species) in the west lake region were cut to feed the local iron-smelting industry (Schmidt 1994). Magnificent herds of gazelles, elephants, rhinos and other wild game were hunted out or chased into the shrinking hinterlands to the west. Beginning in the 13th century, pastoralists from the north brought in huge herds of cattle whose manure greatly enhanced the agricultural productivity of the area by enabling extensive cultivation of bananas and beans. Local farmers further improved the nutrient-poor soils through careful mulching, building up the land over the centuries. Improving the soils also facilitated the commercial production of coffee, which was introduced by German and British colonists. Although the coffee trade brought great wealth to the area for several decades in the early 20th century, the concomitant long-distance trade exacerbated the spread of smallpox, cholera, jiggers, bubonic plague and venereal diseases.

The most recent disease epidemic may be a by-product of Tanzania's 1978 war with Idi Amin, which is said to have left in its wake the first cases of AIDS on the western shore (Bond and Vincent 1991:120). The mobility of fishermen and fish traders place them among the groups at high risk of catching the disease. The economic and social costs of AIDS in this region are astronomically high and rising, "draining away the development impact of any increased production" (Appleton 1993:64). The banana plantations and local soil enhancement techniques are being seriously neglected due to reductions in the agricul-

tural labour force from disease and outmigration. The perch trade as well has drawn farmers away from their lands to catch fish.

The Ecological Impacts and Implications of the Nile Perch Introduction

An Overview of Exotic Species Introductions

The structure and function of ecosystems are sustained by synergistic feedback processes between organisms and the environments which they inhabit. The capacity of an ecosystem to respond to imposed stresses or shocks depends in part on the maintenance of a minimum level of biodiversity within that ecosystem. "All self-organizing living systems," claim Perrings et al., "require a minimum diversity of species to capture the sun's energy and to develop the cyclic relations of fundamental compounds between producers, consumers, and decomposters" (Perrings et al. 1992:202). While we do not yet know the threshold of diversity beyond which an ecosystem cannot function, it has long been suspected that the earth cannot sustain the current loss of species without undergoing significant negative effects on its biological health and productivity.

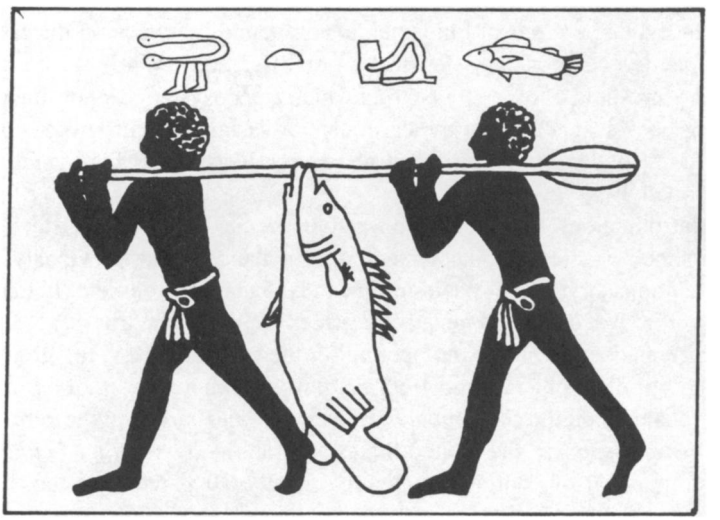
The introduction of exotic, or non-native, species into an ecosystem represents a shock or stress to that system, an imbalance in the previously established relations among the species indigenous to that environment. In many instances, introduced species negatively affect their new environments by outnumbering native species, by competing for their food or spawning grounds or through hybridization (Twongo 1995). A few well-known cases of harmful introductions include the sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) and the zebra mussel (*Dreissena spp.*) in the United States and rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) in Australia. Wilson claims that approximately 20 percent of the world's freshwater fish species are either extinct or in serious decline as a combined result of overfishing and the introduction of exotic fish species (1992:256). On the other hand, recent field work in Northeast Thailand, California and Australia demonstrates that some native species have been able to maintain healthy populations despite their interactions with non-native species. In some instances, the introduced species have even enhanced the economic value of their new aquatic ecosystems (De Iongh and Van Zon 1993; Hall and Tonbridge 1988; Vondracek et al. 1989). The case of the Nile perch in Lake Victoria appears to fall somewhere in between.

The Nile Perch in the Lake Victoria Ecosystem

Found in many major river systems in Africa, *Lates niloticus* is the largest freshwater fish in Africa and the largest freshwater percoid, or spiny-finned fish, in the world (Gudger 1947). In ancient Egypt, the perch was highly valued; numerous mummified remains and paintings on the walls of tombs attest to its importance

for the peoples of the Nile (Gudger 1947) (see Figure 3). In fact, several species of *Lates* inhabited the Victoria basin in the distant past, as evidenced by fossils found on Rusinga Island in Miocene deposits (Fryer 1960; Lowe-McConnell 1975:37). Thus it has been argued that the Nile perch could actually be considered a *reintroduced* rather than an exotic species (Fryer 1960:267). The perch probably died out with the disappearance of open stretches of well-oxygenated water during the course of the Rift Valley development (Fryer 1972:461; Johnson et al. 1996), while other fishes such as the cichlids evolved.

Figure 3
Depiction of the Nile Perch from the Grave of Medum Rahotep



Source: Adapted from Petrie 1892:Plate XII, south wall and south side of recess stele.

In the late 1920s, colonial fisheries personnel began to voice their worry that the stocks of endemic tilapias and several anadromous species were being overfished (Acere 1988; Graham 1929). Some proposed to introduce the predatory Nile perch or tiger fishes (*Hydrocyon spp.*) in order to convert the small haplochromines into a more valuable form of food (Graham 1929:22). From 1951-53, exotic tilapias (*T. zillii*, *T. rendalli*, *Oreochromis niloticus* and *O. leucosticus*) were introduced to increase the numbers of food fishes (Acere 1988; Lowe-McConnell 1975:136) and, in the 1960s, the Nile perch was introduced to the lake in Ugandan waters (Anderson 1961:200).

The perch spread throughout the lake in a clockwise direction, preying upon the abundant stocks of haplochromines. By 1987, haplochromines represented only .9 percent of the total catch in the lake, down from 35 percent in 1981

(Bwathondi 1989:26). By 1988, there were no significant commercial catches of haplochromines at all in Tanzanian waters (Bowman 1990:4), while the perch comprised 65 percent of the catch (CIFA 1992:2).

Current transformations in the Lake Victoria ecosystem have resulted from more than just the impact of introduced fish species. Severe overexploitation of fish stocks remains a serious problem. The spread of the water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) and accelerated algal growth and eutrophication also compromise lacustrine productivity. Imported to East Africa from South America, the hyacinth can grow to cover 100 square metres in a few months (Chamberlain 1993:10). The plant reduces oxygenation at the water's surface by blocking sunlight and minimizing turbulence, restricts the passage of boats and hinders fishing activities. Studies are underway to determine practical and efficient means of eradicating the hyacinth.

Increasing eutrophication also threatens Lake Victoria waters, described in the last century as being "clear as crystal" (Kollmann 1899:5; Long 1876: 139). Noted, beginning in the late 1950s (Hecky 1992), were higher concentrations of algae which have resulted from the loss of cichlid species—both tilapias and haplochromines—that fed on algae and detritus (Graham 1929; Lowe-McConnell 1975:134). Also noted were increased runoff from farms and factories and phosphorous loading from deforestation (Chamberlain 1993; Richerson 1993:135).

The need to control human-induced runoff, manage the fishery and monitor the ecosystem of Lake Victoria has long been recognized by the three riparian state governments. Regional co-ordination began in 1947 with the establishment of the East African Freshwater Fisheries Research Organization (EAFFRO), but languished with its collapse in 1977. In 1980, a sub-committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Committee for Inland Fisheries of Africa (CIFA), adopted some of those duties, and this past year a multilateral Lake Victoria Fisheries Commission was established to facilitate the co-ordination of research and management strategies for the Lake Victoria basin.

The Socio-economic Impacts and Implications of the Nile Perch Introduction

Initially, neither biologists nor local fishermen and consumers appreciated the perch. Many biologists were convinced that the perch's predation of indigenous populations, an example of the "pauperization" of an ecosystem through the loss of biological capital stock (Jutro 1993:248), would result in the most massive extinction of species in the history of humankind (Comte 1982; Wilson 1992). Some local consumers disliked the taste of the perch, and found the fish difficult to prepare and more expensive to process because of its high fat content. Furthermore, the perch was quite rightly blamed for destroying

valued species of local fish and for damaging fish nets (NSF 1992; Reynolds and Gréboval 1988). As the stocks of *Lates* continued to grow, however, their economic potential was eventually recognized, appreciated and heavily exploited. Total annual harvests from the lake rose from an estimated 100 000 tons (pre-Nile perch) to between 350 000 to 400 000 tons (CIFA 1989). These days, fishermen on the western shore are quick to acknowledge the role the perch has played in raising their incomes and standard of living, but many still prefer to eat the now rare lungfish and catfishes (Appleton 1993:90; Bean 1991:82).

The rapid growth of the fishery has spawned as many problems as opportunities. The lakewide demand for netting material has exceeded the supply and theft is such a problem (Bean 1991:5; Ligtvoet 1989:152; Reynolds and Gréboval 1988:31) that fishermen are now obliged to stay out on the water at night, remaining in their canoes in the damp and cold to watch over their nets instead of returning in the morning to bring up their catch. Fishermen are migrating from the areas where the perch have been overfished, along the eastern perimeter of the lake, to catch the fish in its last strongholds in southern and western waters (Bean 1991:57). Labourers appear to be shifting from local farming and livestock activities into the perch business (Appleton 1993:52; Hoekstra 1992:xi), with as-yet-unknown effects on agricultural production. The combined impacts of new fishing technologies and large-scale export of the perch to Europe, Israel and the United States have increasingly stratified the fishing population, which in many areas is now dominated by wealthy businessmen (known locally as "fisher kings"), transport truck owners and large-scale processors (Asowa-Okwe 1992; Harris et al. 1995). As the demand for and price of the perch have risen, fewer consumers on the western shore are still able to afford to buy fish as a regular source of protein.

The Effects on the Fish Trade

Before *Lates* dominated the fish trade around the lake, most fish was consumed where it was caught, or sold fresh along the coast (EAHC 1953:3). Endemic tilapias, however, were exported in large quantities to Nairobi (Dobbs 1928:107; Ford 1955:62). Dried fish was transported from the islands and sold in Uganda where traders could obtain better prices (Césard 1935; Hartwig 1976:84; Mors 1953:91; Reining 1967:175). Some of the fish traders also bought and sold coffee (Culwick and Culwick 1940:83), another example of linkage between the fishing and agricultural sectors.

Starting in the 1980s, vast increases in Nile perch harvests shifted the supply-demand balance. Currently, perch are being exported from Kagera waters to meet the high demand in other countries. An estimated one third of the total catch now goes to Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire (Bowman 1990:11), some of which feeds refugee populations. In a new trade arrangement, joint-venture exporters from Kenya buy fresh perch directly from fishermen or middlemen

and transport it by refrigerated truck from Bukoba and Kemondo Bay (a landing site where fish are brought in from the islands) to Uganda. Eventually the perch is shipped overseas to generate desperately needed foreign exchange. The Kenyan company that constructed a filleting plant in Bukoba employs far fewer local workers than had been originally promised and competes with local traders for fish, as evidenced in the case study below.

Case Study 1

Mama Sifa, who has ethnic ties to Rwanda, buys and smokes catfish and perch from a half-dozen markets in towns along the coast from Bukoba to Muleba. She received two loans from a U.N. regional integrated fisheries project, one of which she was able to repay ahead of schedule. Hired by others to sell fish from 1982 to 1984, she saved her pay and eventually started her own business. "No one even knows I got the loan," Sifa laughed. "I didn't want trouble, or for the money to be stolen. I didn't even tell my husband until my project was underway and doing well!" Their businesses are separate, and Sifa seems free to spend her money as she likes. "Although I have a lot of experience trading fish," Sifa admitted, "I really should move into the second-hand clothes business. Fish are hard to get now. The [Kenya-owned fish filleting] factory [in Bukoba] is buying all of them."

At the time of my most recent visit in 1996, foreign fish traders had collected such a large percentage of the catch for export that the price of fish was already well out of the reach of many locals. Although higher fish prices benefit fishermen, many consumers and small-scale processors, including virtually all women processors, are finding it very difficult to compete with the exporters.

As the Nile perch spread around the lake, fishermen, processors and traders responded quickly to the expanded opportunity in the fishery (Reynolds and Gréboval 1988). Fish can now be found throughout the year, even during the months between April and August, when fishing had been very slow in the pre-perch period (Dobbs 1928:99; EAHC 1953:5). The estimated number of fishermen on the lake increased 140 percent from the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s (Bwathondi 1989:24; EAHC 1953).

Bigger fish harvests from pre-industrialized nations around the world have filled a gap in the world market that has resulted from overfishing and insufficient yields in industrialized countries. While this has meant increased income for fishing communities in poor countries, the transformation of essentially subsistence or "for use" fisheries into primarily commercial or "for exchange" fisheries has had far-reaching negative effects as well. The survival of the few remaining healthy fish stocks is threatened by increased exploitation. There is now a steady flow of fish from poor countries, where they used to be the cheapest form of animal protein, to rich ones (Kent 1987). Facilitated access to more efficient technologies has encouraged individual rather than com-

munity organization (Lieber 1994), interest in short-term profits rather than long-term use (McCay 1978) and the erosion of common property control of fish resources (Bailey 1988).

The Gender Impacts and Implications of the Nile Perch Introduction

An Overview of Gender Roles in Fishing Societies Around the World

In only a handful of fishing societies around the world do women work side by side with men to catch fish. The dangerous, high-risk nature of fishing has fostered certain ritual beliefs that have served firstly to restrict women from access to boats and boat construction, secondly to keep women away from men engaged in fishing magic or preparing for a fishing trip (Acheson 1981:288), thirdly to encourage men and women to refrain from sexual intercourse before fishing and lastly to prevent menstruating or pregnant women from participating in communal fishing activities (Chapman 1987:882). Some fishermen claim that having women on board a vessel is disruptive (Allison and Jacobs 1989:164). But the most common reasons cited for women's limited participation in fishing activities are the following: (1) women's primary attention to time-consuming reproductive and domestic tasks reduces their opportunities for travel and availability; (2) cultural proscriptions inhibit the contact of women with unrelated men; and (3) that women's limited access to training and start-up capital restricts their ability to undertake income-generating activities (ALCOM 1992:10; Allison and Jacobs 1989; Hourihan 1986:86). In some places, low returns from fisheries activities discourage women's participation (Gulati 1981). However, women in fishing communities become eminently visible when the definition of a fishery is expanded, correctly, to include activities that are equally important to the success and efficiency of the fishery as a whole.

In addition to harvesting, all fisheries economies have two other crucial sectors: processing and marketing. Due to the high perishability of fish and fish products, all three sectors are inextricably interrelated and interdependent (ALCOM 1992:3). With the attention focussed on the hunt on the "high seas," other parts of the harvesting sector in which women are importantly involved until recently have been generally ignored. For instance, women make important contributions to their household economy by harvesting seaweed, seashells, bivalves, crustaceans, octopus and squid, and small fish on reefs and shoreline areas around the world (Chapman 1987; Cole 1991). An even greater number of women participate in various processing and marketing activities. Tied importantly to fish harvesting, processing and marketing, ancillary activities in which women often play a dominant role include net-making and mending, fuelwood collection, beer brewing, preparation of lodging and meals, and the provision of informal credit and sexual services (ALCOM 1992:13).

In a few extensively documented cases, most notably in coastal communities in West African countries, men and women fisherfolk work together very

closely as units of efficient, productive co-operation. In these instances, wives buy fish from their husbands to process and sell (Vercruijsse 1983). Sometimes these same women extend credit to fishermen from their savings. Female fishmongers in Ghana and Senegal, for example, have acquired considerable wealth and power through their marketing enterprises, although the specific ecological and historical reasons behind their empowerment have yet to be determined (Leacock 1986:122). Similarly, Mead found that some women among the Tchambuli in New Guinea had gained significant status through the trade of fish (Mead 1935), and Gulati observed the same among the women of Kerala, India (1981).

Where women are involved importantly in fisheries activities, they carry more responsibilities and power in the community and at home (Cole 1991; Thompson 1985:3). The primary responsibility of women in all fishing communities, to raise children and thus reproduce the fishing unit, is often overlooked and undervalued. In fishing economies where the fishermen stay out to sea for months at a time, women are relied upon heavily to keep the affairs at home in order.

In those communities where women customarily were involved in fisheries activities, the effects of modernization have often been negative. Modern gear has negated the need for net makers and menders (Hourihan 1986), middlemen with more money and better business contacts have displaced female traders (Pàlsson 1990; Robertson 1984), automated factories are doing the work of women gutters and scalers, and foreign business interests and local banks have edged out women as loan providers (Vercruijsse 1983). However, the development of a large exchange market for fish in places where women were previously not involved importantly in fisheries activities, such as in the northwestern corner of Tanzania, can provide windows of opportunity for women who judge the potential for income generation high enough to risk involvement in a low-status, male-dominated field.

Women's Changing Roles in the Western Shore Fishery

While women have long been involved in fisheries activities on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria (Dobbs 1928:99; Hoekstra 1992:x; Reynolds and Gréboval 1988:8), the participation of women along the western shore was extremely limited before the arrival of the Nile perch (Bowman 1990:8; UNDP 1991:13). Elders interviewed for this research from communities in both the northern and southern districts unanimously voiced the opinion that during the pre-perch period, very few women were involved in fish processing, marketing or capture. At most, women scaled, cleaned and cooked fish brought to the house. Several elders did recall, however, that a few "brave" women occasionally helped pull fish out of nets brought in to shore.

The reasons for women's limited participation included the absence of *tilapia* in the northwestern waters, the presence of steep cliffs along the lakeshore that hinder travel to and from fishing settlements, the threat of raiding

war parties from Uganda and the dangers posed by crocodiles and hippopotamus that inhabited the lakeshore until the middle of this century.

Local taboos and restrictions keeping women out of the fisheries sector mirrored real threats to the welfare of those working on or near the lake. In previous centuries and up until the arrival of the Germans into the area, Baganda chiefs from the area just north of Kagera Region regularly sent raiding parties up and down the coast, forcing many local inhabitants to settle well inland to avoid attack. At the turn of the century, the explorer Declé noted that, because of crocodiles, most local fishermen never learned to swim (Declé 1898:390). The reptiles could "overturn small fishing boats or seize the crews, and sometimes even attack people standing on the shore" (Peters 1891:490). Information gathered through household surveys, interviews with village elders and archival documents revealed that the elimination of inter-kingdom warfare and dangerous wild animals during the colonial period in combination with the new opportunities in the improved fishery encouraged the growing participation of local women in fish processing and marketing.

The arrival of the perch into Kagera waters changed markedly the gender division of labour in the fishery. "Since the arrival of the perch," stated one male informant, "many women are participating in fisheries activities." More women and girls are helping to pull in beach seines (although few will agree to work out on the open water). The growth of local women's participation in the fisheries economy along the western shore is due also to the decline of the local agricultural sector and to the debilitating effects of AIDS in the region. Like the woman interviewed in the following case study, many villagers are taking advantage of every opportunity to generate income to support ailing relatives or orphaned children.

Case Study 2

Mama Chausiku cares for her own child and two of her deceased sister's children in a grass house in a small fishing village in Muleba District. She is pregnant again, but still unmarried. "No one wants to get married to a woman who is already taking care of so many kids," she explained wryly. For a long time she smoked and fried fish, but the smoke from the fires has begun to irritate her lungs, a common affliction of fish processors. Chausiku is hard-working and self-reliant, paying back her fisheries project loan well before its due date. "I also sell cassava flour ground at a milling machine in Muleba. And I grow sweet potatoes, too. I make as much money from that as I do from my fish business! Other women who applied for loans and didn't get them said I'd never be able to pay back mine," she laughed.

These days, a growing number of women are involved in fish-processing activities (Kiobya 1994). Methods of processing fish in Kagera Region used in the pre-perch era, which include sun-drying, smoking, frying and salting, are

the same used today, although the intensity of the processing effort has increased. Because of the large amount of fat contained in Nile perch, more fuel is required to smoke them than to smoke any other species, resulting in higher processing costs and further exploitation of the local forest resources (Ligtvoet 1989:153; Reynolds and Gréboval 1988:ix). In the southern part of the region, juvenile perch are dried and smoked on piles of burning grass. Women processors, like the one described in the next case study, have found they can more easily afford to buy and sell small fish than large ones.

Case Study 3

Mama Jovenia, mother of two small children and the wife of a fisherman, trades smoked perch and tilapia in Biharamulo District. She also sells fried perch and ginger tea from a small shop. A competent businesswoman, she also applied for and received a loan from the U.N. fisheries project, which allowed her to expand and further diversify her activities. "I learned the fish business by watching my sister [who lives in a nearby village]," Jovenia explained. "I tried it myself and saw it was easy!" She buys dagaa [the minnow *Rastrineobola argentea*] and juvenile Nile perch from her husband and resells it, using the proceeds to buy soap. She then reinvests the profit from the sale of the soap in her fish business. "If I had more money, I would buy children's clothes, second-hand goods, and cloth to trade in Mwanza [the regional capital on the southern edge of the lake]," she added, gazing down at the pile of small fish at her feet. The juvenile perch her husband brought in for his wife this day are only four or five inches long, caught many growing months before reproductive maturity, when they could have spawned and replenished the local stocks.

The Nile perch is the only fish processed extensively through frying, which is undertaken almost exclusively by women. Gutted and dried, the fish are cut up into small sections, fried in large pans, and sold by the piece. The frying process generates so much fish oil that it is collected afterwards and sold as a by-product. Other perch by-products include the skin (used to manufacture shoes, belts and purses in some areas) and the swim bladder, which is stretched and sun-dried until hard and then sold to traders for export to the British Isles for filtering beer and wine and to the Orient for making soup stock (Baskin 1994:79). The Nile perch is caught in sufficient size and quantity to be frozen whole or as fillets and transported to urban centres (Kampala, Nairobi, and Mombasa in this case) for export to Europe, Israel and the United States.

Women are also involved in fish trading and support activities: running tea shops and providing domestic services for fishermen. A few even own boats and hire crews. Bereft of resources, many AIDS widows travel to the islands to provide sexual services (Appleton 1993:65,105). Fisherfolks' fear of contracting AIDS has encouraged the adoption of "hawala" or "wife-to-be" contracts in fishing communities, a type of long-term partnership between a man and

woman that promotes monogamous relationships (Appleton 1993:58). It is rare to find a woman surviving without the protection of a man, whether he be husband, boyfriend or relative, in the rowdy, somewhat lawless communities situated in the more remote areas of the region.

Women's Involvement in the Western Shore Fishery as Historical Process

Women's increased involvement in the male-dominated fishing industry on the western shore is the most recent example of a series of social and economic roles ascribed to or adopted by local women over the past centuries that transcended their customary roles as mothers and wives. Women in this area held the roles of princesses and priestesses in the royal courts, sisters in Western missions and sex workers in urban centres of East Africa. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that, once most of the dangers associated with the lake disappeared and the fishery became much more profitable due to the Nile perch trade, women grasped the opportunity to carve out a niche for themselves in this sector. However, the security of women's new opportunities in the fishery and the potential empowerment that would accompany their generation and control of income is seriously threatened today, because foreign traders are facilitating the transfer of protein capital from the western shore of Lake Victoria to Western nations that have already severely depleted their own fisheries resources. Gerrard observed the same phenomenon on the eastern side of the lake (1991). As evidenced by the case studies presented in this article, competition in the Lake Victoria fishery has also engendered various forms of inter- and intra-household conflict and co-operation.

The Future of the Western Shore Fishery

The relatively late arrival of the perch to the western shore in contrast to the other areas of the lake has meant that the fishing populations in this region have benefited significantly from the growth in the fishery only within the last decade or so. The new opportunity to make money, especially in light of recent low crop prices and production, has drawn more men and women to the lakeshore, and in the process transformed a once-despised occupation into the last hope for a physically and spiritually wounded people. Intensification of fishing effort has already made inroads into the perch population, however, as evidenced by the reduction in numbers of large perch caught and the trade in juvenile *Lates*. Local fishermen have noticed the changes in the composition of their catches, and a few have even voiced their belief in the need for management through regulation to U.N. fisheries project staff (Appleton 1993).

Currently, some biologists believe that the growth curve for the perch has hit its peak and is on the decline. Though the perch have seriously depleted haplochromine stocks and are feeding on the minnow *Rastrineobola argentea*, benthic shrimp *Caridina spp.* and even their own offspring (Ligtvoet 1989), I regularly noted the presence of some of the endemic fish species feared to be

"extinct" among the catches on the western shore in 1993 and 1994, albeit in small quantities. It is possible, and to be hoped, that the cichlid species will recover and over time strike a prey-predator balance with the perch. While the boom in perch catches may not continue, the return of locally valued fishes will be welcomed by local consumers.

Conundrums and Contemplations

Close analysis of the perch problem leaves the researcher asking a variety of complicated, and perhaps rhetorical, questions. For example:

- Should a species introduced to an ecosystem it inhabited thousands of years earlier be considered "exotic," and does its previous interactions with indigenous species have any bearing on how it interacts with species today?
- To the fishing communities and the state government, the economic value of the lake is much higher since the perch was introduced, but is the cost of intensified social stratification and loss of protein from the diets of local consumers worth the gains?
- Would the benefits that women enjoyed as they became involved in the fish-processing and marketing sector of the fishing economy have been greater if, firstly, the high prices of the perch resulting from its trade overseas and, secondly, the negative experiences with co-operatives during Tanzania's socialist period had not caused the women to compete with one another instead of working together?
- Has the existence of a wide variety of lacustrine microhabitats along the vast shore of the lake stymied scientists' abilities to predict the direction of the future dynamics of the lacustrine ecosystem and the potential impacts on the human populations that depend on the lake for their survival?

The following final case study encapsulates many of the problems embodied in this most complicated of fishery systems.

Case Study 4

Mama Eveta used to fry and smoke perch to sell until the competition with local traders from the islands forced the price of the fresh fish out of her reach. "I started in 1993, because I lived near the lake, fish were available, and you could make a good profit," she explained. "But now the situation is . . . different," she added. "Now I buy and sell medicine for livestock. My husband [who is a government livestock field officer] helps me." Eveta was able to provide her family with new bedsheets and clothes and cows which supply milk for the household. "I would like to expand my medicine business, but I don't want money from a bank. The conditions are too difficult. I haven't seen many other women borrowing money from banks either," she said, shaking her head. "Wives can do things for the family, too, you know, not just husbands. My husband's salary isn't big enough to support our family well. Please don't forget women, because women have no power without money!"

The nature of the historical and processual ecology of the western shore of Lake Victoria—complex, dynamic and site-specific—defies all attempts to make generalizations about the relationship of Kagera residents to their environment that will remain valid over time. This analysis of sudden, repeated and catastrophic changes, whose outcome was not predictable and whose ultimate consequences are still emerging, provides us with an important counter-image to the view of people and ecosystems in pre-industrialized nations as static and stable, or linear and progressive. The push by industrialized nations through development organizations to modernize world fisheries, that is, to increase productivity and efficiency through the introduction of new technologies, began in the 1960s and 1970s (Bailey 1988). For the most part, this was achieved by introducing outboard engines, better nets and "improved" fish stocks that have allowed fisherfolk both to extend the range of their capture activities and to increase their yields. In some instances, these changes have improved the standard of living in fishing communities, enabling fishermen to invest in agricultural pursuits (Cole 1991), for example, or to integrate themselves better into the larger community (Ward 1967), and allowing women to gain authority by generating and controlling their own income (Pratt 1995). As this story demonstrates, however, the important challenge that must still be faced is to determine how an increasingly valuable natural resource can be managed over the long term to benefit more than just a privileged minority.

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CHANGING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FOR WOMEN IN THE NILE PERCH FISHING COMMUNITIES ON LAKE VICTORIA

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Abstract: Large-scale changes in the ecology of Lake Victoria have had a number of implications for the women in riparian households. It has proven difficult for them to take advantage of the economic opportunities that have arisen while their access to the lake fisheries has been diminished. This article reviews these changes at the levels of the lake, the community and the household. Fish-related economic activities are particularly important for women who are heads of households. These activities also afford married women greater independence than other activities. Women are responding to changes in access to the lake by working together at a community level.

Résumé: Des changements fondamentaux dans l'écologie du lac Victoria ont eu un certain nombre d'implications pour les femmes des villages riverains. Il leur a été particulièrement difficile de saisir les occasions économiques qui se sont présentées tandis que leur accès aux pêcheries du lac à diminué. Cet article examine ces changements au niveau du lac, de la communauté et de la famille. Les activités économiques reliées à la pêche sont très importantes pour les femmes, chef de famille. Ces activités donnent aussi aux femmes plus d'indépendance que certaines autres activités. Les femmes réagissent au fait qu'elles ont moins accès au lac en travaillant ensemble au niveau communautaire.

Introduction

Unknown persons introduced an exotic fish species, the Nile perch *Lates niloticus*), to Lake Victoria in the 1950s, and in the late 1970s its population sud-

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denly exploded. The piscivorous Nile perch decimated most other fish species, and as many as 300 may have become extinct (Barel 1986). In combination with fishing pressure and changes in water chemistry (Bundy and Pitcher 1995), these events transformed the lake's fisheries. Where once there were many kinds of fish, now there are only three commercially important species: the Nile perch (*Lates niloticus*), one species of tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) and the sardine-like dagaa (a Swahili term for *Rastrineobola argentea* which has no name in English).

These changes vastly increased the value of fish production, and the number of fishers in the Tanzanian portion of the lake increased 46% between 1980 and 1986 (Reynolds and Grèboval 1988). Tanzanian fishers christened the Nile perch the "saviour." Overfishing has been a problem on Lake Victoria since the beginning of the century (Dobbs 1927) and the lake was badly depleted in the 1970s. During the 1980s the Nile perch meant a new source of inexpensive protein for people around the Tanzanian shoreline.

The Nile perch is a large, white, meaty fish that finds a ready international market. An industrial processing and export industry grew up in Kenya and Uganda during the 1980s and in Tanzania in the early 1990s (Reynolds et al. 1992). The fish are exported as frozen fillets from processing plants on the lake shore. The export industry has driven up the price of Nile perch and led to an increase in capital investments in fish-harvesting equipment. The demand generated by the filleting plants is huge and growing. The degree to which this demand is felt varies in different parts of the lake. The plants are swiftly expanding their capacity for collecting fish by boat rather than truck, which deepens their penetration into isolated areas. All but one of these 11 plants are located in the large towns of Mwanza, Bukoba and Musoma (see Figure 1), with the greatest concentration in Mwanza. Several thousand people, both men and women, are employed in these plants.

For the people living beside Lake Victoria these changes represent a vast alteration in their human ecology. The present article focusses on one important aspect of this alteration—the impact of these changes on women. It presents a broad sketch of what is happening, rather than an in-depth analysis of changes in a particular village or region.

A Critical Approach to Human Ecology

When we approach human ecology from a critical perspective, the central question is how human responses to ecological change result from the interaction of groups possessing different amounts of social power. We can broadly understand these responses as new rules and institutions governing interaction with the environment. As the environment changes, new institutions are created and made effective through processes of legitimation, surveillance and discipline. One crucial aspect of such an analysis is the role that gender plays.

If differences in social power determine what new institutions will appear in response to changes in natural ecology, then these changes will have different implications for men and women. Ecological changes are intertwined with political and economic changes. For the populations living near Lake Victoria, changes in all three of these categories have always left women relatively more disadvantaged than they were before the change. At each juncture, the new "rules of the game" have served those who were in positions of advantage when the changes began.

A good illustration is change in rights to land. Okeyo (1980) charts how colonial authorities "reformed" the traditional, corporate, clan-based land-tenure system of the lake-side Luo people to reflect the male head-of-household model. Later, in the 1970s, Kenyan adjudicators believed that widows, and women who had only daughters, did not need as much land as families with men. In Tanzania, during the *ujamaa* village scheme, women were deprived of their traditional claims to land in favour of men and village leaders, while their participation in village planning was restricted because they were not "heads-of-households." That may have been just as well, because their work loads left them with no time to spend in endless village debates (McCall 1987).

Increasingly commodified economic relations have meant greater pressure on East African women. In agriculture more commodified relations have often increased economic disparities between men and women (Raikes 1978). The main driver of these disparities has been labour specialization on farms where men take charge of cash crops while women are left with subsistence crops. "In charge" should not be read as "doing the work." Indeed, in at least one district in Tanzania (not near Lake Victoria) the single most productive investment found among an emerging class of wealthier, commodity-producing peasants was the bride prices of the wives who provided the labour (Raikes 1978). Another important source of growing disparity has been the greater male opportunity for off-farm employment. Smith and Stevens (1988), in a study done on the west side of Lake Victoria, found that off-farm employment is the most important contributor to farm success. Male labour migration has also increased women's already disproportionate agricultural labour burden. Fortmann's (1979) study of farms near Mwanza shows that, in general, increases in labour burden due to commodification were greater for women than for men. Men also enjoy greater access to credit and agricultural extension services. The present article indicates that the patterns exhibited in the commodification of agriculture have had parallels in the intensified commodification of Lake Victoria fisheries.

Women in East Africa have not accepted these changes passively. In a survey article on the effects of structural adjustment in Tanzania, Mbilinyi (1990) observed an increased resistance among women to patriarchal social relations.

For example, women and children mounted a successful tea-picking strike in Rungwe (Mbilinyi 1990), a highland area southeast of Lake Victoria. Local organizing is providing a less dramatic, but still effective, strategy for increasing women's power. Women are refusing to work on family land and going to neighbours' lands instead. They are finding ways of circulating cash and labour among themselves, which are the two most important constraints that they face (Thomas 1988). They do so in ways that help them respond to immediate needs, thus giving them more flexibility in meeting economic and ecological changes.

A critical approach to human ecology recognizes that responses to ecological change are the products of interaction within tangible social networks, i.e., people talking and bargaining with one another while making practical decisions. Central to the ecological nature of the analysis is that these interactions take place in concrete time and space. Spatial (and temporal) scale is a central organizing principle of a human ecological analysis. Particularly important are the "back and front regions" (Giddens 1984) which influence potentials for the surveillance of behaviour and the enforcement of rules and institutions. These regions are, in turn, often a function of geographical scale and physical proximity.

Thompson (1985) in a survey of fishing communities from a number of different countries found that men's physical absence while at sea and their economic dependence on the women who process and trade the fish are important aspects of the situation of women in many fishing communities. The dependence, however, stems from the absence. The physical absence of the men, and their reduced ability to oversee the women's processing and trading activities, contributes to their economic dependence. This absence has not had the same effects on Lake Victoria that Thompson (1985) documents in other fishing communities, because small-scale fishing does not usually take the form of a husband-and-wife collaboration that is common elsewhere. The spatial dimension, however, remains crucial here in other ways.

The importance of scale in ecological analyses offers a logical way to present the data we have on Lake Victoria. To understand in concrete terms what the ecological changes have meant to the lake-side women, we analyze them at three[1] relevant spatial scales: the lake, the community and the household. After a short description of our research activities, we discuss each of these levels in turn.

Research Methods

The data presented here were collected by a team of researchers from the Tanzanian Fisheries Management Institute and Michigan State University from June of 1992 through December of 1994. Qualitative interviews were held with fisheries management professionals and others who work in the fisheries

sector. A standard schedule of open-ended questions was done with the owners, and in one case the manager, of 10 of the 11 fish filleting plants. Extensive field work was done between January and July of 1993 on five randomly selected fishing beaches and from June to November of 1994 on an additional four beaches. Week-long follow-up visits were made to the first five beaches in early 1994. The selection of these beaches was stratified to ensure geographical coverage and an adequate number of larger beaches. In our sample frame, we defined a fishing beach as any place where fishing boats gathered on shore and where fish are traded. On each beach a formal survey of boat owners, management and fishing crews, riparian households and fish processors and traders was conducted. In addition, group and in-depth interviews were held with members of the same populations during the approximately two weeks that the research team stayed on each beach. At least one group interview on each beach was conducted only with women with the exception that both Médard and Wilson participated. The major theme was always related to economics with a special emphasis on the problems women encounter doing fish-related and other small businesses. Many in-depth, individual interviews were done with women and the "stories" reported below were generated by these interviews, which were mainly conducted by Médard.

The formal survey included household interviews which were always done with the female head-of-household, save in the few cases where a bachelor's household was selected. When we arrived on a beach we selected a sample of 25 boats. Where there were fewer than 25 boats we selected all of them. Fishing household interviews were done with the spouses of a randomly selected sub-sample of the fishers working on the selected boats. Non-fishing household interviews were conducted with a random sample of households that were within one half kilometre of the beach but did not have a member of their household involved in fishing. Households were defined by physical compounds except when multiple wives shared a compound; in these cases each woman was treated as the head of a separate household and all were interviewed. Approximately 10 non-fishing households and the same number of fishing households were interviewed on each beach. These interviews were conducted, with close supervision, by a young woman on our research team. Médard also did fish trader interviews with both male and female traders who bought their fish on the beach.

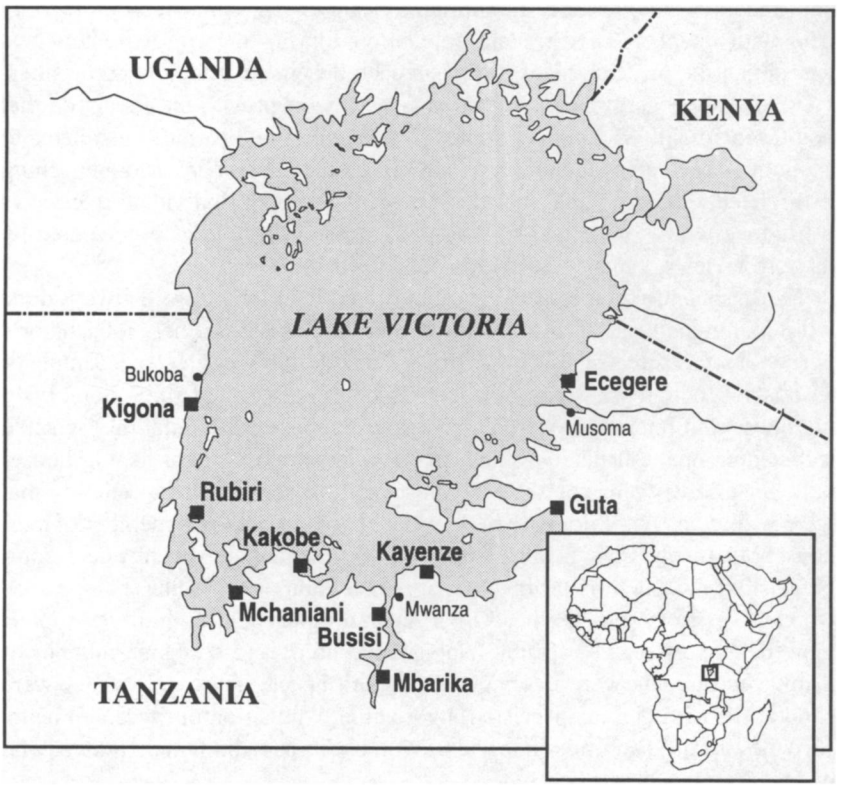
The Lake

General Changes

In surface area, Lake Victoria is the second largest freshwater lake in the world after Lake Superior. Three countries share it: Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The Tanzanian section is the largest with 51 percent of the lake's surface. The lake is situated on a plateau between the two East African Rift valleys. In con-

trast to other nearby lakes situated within the Rifts, Lake Victoria is shallow with a mean of 20 and a maximum of 79 metres depth. One result of this shallowness is that the lake is an extremely rich source of nutrition. The lake basin boasts a human population estimated as high as 20 million people (RTF2 1995). In some parts of the lake basin the population density is among the highest rural densities in the world.

Figure 1
Map of Lake Victoria Showing Research Beaches and Major Tanzanian Towns



The biological causes of the changes in Lake Victoria are disputed. The Nile perch introduction happened in the 1950s, but, mysteriously, the population eruption did not happen until the late 1970s. Concurrent with the growth of the Nile perch, scientists have observed a depletion in the level of dissolved oxygen in the water. Most biologists had believed that Nile perch caused this change by eating plant-eating fish, which led to greater overall biomass and greater oxygen depletion when all this biomass rotted. More recent work has suggested that run-off from agriculture and sewage caused the drop in levels

of dissolved oxygen. This in turn made a certain shrimp, a preferred Nile perch food, more available. This new source of food is argued to be the cause of the Nile perch population explosion (Bundy and Pitcher 1995).

Lake-side people had many different kinds of fish available to them before 1980. The most abundant were various species of haplochromis. They are edible, but small and bony—think of eating aquarium fish, which many of these species are. Catching haplochromis with woven traps was women's work and they were always available as a source of protein when more appetizing options were not. Men caught lungfish, tilapia, catfish and other larger species. Women processed these fish using simple technologies such as sun-drying, smoking and salting, and there was an active regional and national fish trade.

These people responded swiftly to the advent of the Nile perch through new fishing practices, shifts in labour and investment. Employment on the whole lake, including ancillary activities, rose from 158 000 people before the Nile perch to a level of 422 000 people by 1992, the peak of the Nile perch fishery. Earnings per fisher[2] increased by $473 per year adjusted for inflation, a significant sum in Tanzania (Reynolds et al. 1992). Fishers sent more of their catch to central markets, particularly the central market at Mwanza, which handles 90% of the legal trade to distant markets (Maembe 1990). Sun-dried dagaa has also undergone a recent explosion in exports to neighbouring countries (Reynolds et al. 1992).

Small-scale fishing boats generate almost all of the fishing effort on the lake. These fishers use plank-keel canoes taking a total crew of two to five people. Owners of boats are commonly involved in beach activities, for example, in selling the catch. On the more commercialized beaches they rarely fish themselves. An increased separation of ownership and management of fishing units has accompanied the new fishing patterns (Harris et al. 1995). Increasingly, small-scale fishers are receiving loans from large-scale processors who are competing to guarantee supplies.

Effects on Women

As early as the late 1980s, before any major incursion by the international market, Leendertse (1990) observed that women were being increasingly marginalized in the fishing industry. Women had remained involved in the smaller-scale, less-remunerative processing of native species, while the newer technologies associated with the Nile perch were dominated by men.

One reason was the oiliness of the Nile perch. The fat produced when this fish is smoked or fried is much more than the amount produced by other species. This meant that smoking kilns for the new fish had to be larger and use more fuel. This increase in capital costs was a barrier for women trying to enter the Nile perch smoking business. Low capital means lower-quality fish with a shorter shelf life.

Another reason was that new, and more remunerative, marketing channels arose for the Nile perch. Men dominated these new channels, and informal barriers limited women's access. This is beginning to change. While the near-lake trade in fresh Nile perch is the province of young men on bicycles, many women are involved in a large and growing regional trade in smoked Nile perch.

In fisheries around Africa, commercialization of fishing has pushed women from part-time participation to exclusion (Scudder and Conelly 1985). The Nile perch processing factories can afford to pay higher prices, making it much more difficult for women and other small traders to get fish. A significant amount of small-sized fish is not acceptable to the factories. These leavings are available for smoking, which requires significant capital and is usually done by men, and for other kinds of processing which do not require as much capital, and are done by both men and women. Salting, sun-drying and frying fish are the types of processing that are widely available to women on these beaches.

Recent management measures are bound to have a negative effect on women. All nets with a mesh size of smaller than five inches have been banned. This includes beach seines, which are an important source of the smaller fish that women use. Beach seines are very large, labour-intensive nets that are pulled into the shore. They often use local children as pullers in exchange for some fish. This makes them an important avenue of access to the resource for families who do not work on fishing boats or own fishing gear (Wilson and Médard forthcoming). These management measures are arguably needed from the perspective of having a sustainable resource, but their impact will be felt disproportionately by women and poorer households.

Of all the beaches we visited the one most deeply penetrated by the international Nile perch market was Rubiri Island. Rubiri is located in the southwest corner of the lake, which is the last area to have substantial numbers of Nile perch, mainly because it was the last area of penetration of the international market. In 1992 it was a quiet fishing island with a few people. By 1994 it had a population of more than a thousand people, possessed one hundred fishing boats, and was a regular stop for large fish collection vessels. Mama Nne's story is illustrative of the difficulties that the penetration of the international market has created for women.

> Mama Nne first came to Rubiri in 1992 just when it was beginning to become an important fishing centre. She had investment capital of $60 with which she intended to begin a tea shop. She decided to begin fish processing after she arrived on the island, mainly because of the difficulty she was experiencing getting supplies for the tea shop to the island at reasonable prices.
>
> Mama Nne decided to salt and dry Nile perch. In 1992 the fish were plentiful and cheap. Beginning in 1993 ever more collection boats were arriving on the island from the fish-processing factories in Mwanza town. The factory agents began to build direct ties to the fishers; they offered higher prices and gave them

fishing gear, engines and fuel. Mama Nne, along with other local and regional fish processors, is only able to get fish that the factory boats reject. Going entire days without being able to buy anything is common. She sometimes travels by hired boat to other islands to find fish, but this is risky because the lake in that area is very open and rough.

Most of the women fish processors on Rubiri Island are single women with no other means of support. Mama Nne says, "I don't know what kind of business I can do, the poor continuing to lose while the rich get more and more."

The difficulties women face not only come from their economic disadvantages. Men will actively resist women's participation in sectors where they see them as a competitive threat. Male traders put pressure on fishers not to sell to women. On one landing beach women complained to us that men use their easier access to short-term credit to keep women from getting fish. Men have been known to physically block women from access to fish (Masaiganah 1992). We heard several reports of demands for sexual favours in exchange for business access.

Two other areas of the Nile perch trade have been available to women but are now threatened. The first is trade in sun-dried swim bladders. These bladders are used for soup in Asia and in beer brewing in Europe. This had been a minor, ancillary trade, and many women moved into it in the late 1980s (Bwathondi and Mosille 1988). Prices for these bladders rose steeply in the early 1990s; our survey of smaller fish traders found them to be the major source of profit. Men seem to be moving in and beginning to dominate activities in this sector.

The other area is the frying of fish "racks." These are the head and skeleton of the fish that is left after filleting in the processing factories. They sell these racks very cheaply to local women who fry them and sell them in neighbouring villages where they are popular. Currently, there is a move by large private concerns, supported by the government and international agencies (RTF1 1995), to use these racks to make fish meal. Some technical difficulties have slowed this effort, but women are threatened with the loss of this source of income and inexpensive protein as well.

It seems that when sectors of the fishing business are considered ancillary and minor they available for women. If changes in prices or availability make these sectors more attractive, then women have more difficulty participating. In addition, fisheries management measures threaten women's access to the fish resource.

The Communities

Fishing communities are not alike. One important difference on Lake Victoria is the degree to which a community is part of the network for gathering fish for the international market. These communities have many full-time fishers, who are more likely to be temporary residents. These migrants, and the minority of local

fishers who can take advantage of new opportunities, are the beneficiaries of an increasing income gap among fishers (Wilson and Médard forthcoming).

A more diversified household reproduction strategy marks those villages that remain isolated from the international market. The fishing is less capital-intensive and more seasonal. Women's participation is often in response to specific needs for cash, rather than a full-time business.

The way lake-side women are blocked from participating in formal, community-level life has been a major factor in their increasing poverty and continued political marginality. Women are often able to make decisions about their own farms and families, but at the village level their participation is very limited (Fortmann 1979). Few women at the local level are members of the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the leading and formerly the sole ruling political party. Most of the "mabalozi," party ten-cell leaders who play a very important role in local life, are men. This community-level disadvantage is not absolute. A few women hold important posts in local government.

Women's Groups

The former ruling party has its own national women's group with branches in the villages. In all the communities that we visited we found that these local branches have become moribund. So completely have they defined the idea of women's groups, however, that new structures have been very slow to replace them. Ineffective, and at times manipulative, outside leadership, which has been a problem for women's groups throughout East Africa (Staudt and Col 1991; Udvardy 1988), has been an obstacle around Lake Victoria as well. Clan rivalries are another hindrance to organization in some areas (Gerrard 1990; Masaiganah 1992).

Around the lake, "most groups were organized in the atmosphere, and they are not strong" (Masaiganah 1992). An experienced organizer told us the story of one group that lasted only a short time. They were organized by a religious group. They decided to try to overcome the cultural bias against women fishing on open waters, although there was no great desire for this expressed by the women. Perhaps the organizers thought that the women's negative attitude toward going fishing would not be very strong—since the community was located miles away from the lake (Masaiganah 1992).

In the villages we visited, we found that a general distaste for collective economic action has surfaced as a reaction to the excesses of the *ujamaa* period. This is true of both men and women. Women want to work on their particular enterprise as individuals, although they are still willing to come together for common logistical support such as transportation. Gerrard (1990) described the women's fish-trading system as "one woman—one unit of trade," but pointed out that they still co-operate, helping and teaching one another. Attempts to manage common property, such as commonly owned fish-

smoking kilns on the beaches of Sote (Gerrard 1990) and Igombe (authors' observation), have not been successful.

Women's revolving credit groups are now beginning to emerge in the area, particularly near Mwanza, but have had a slower start than in other parts of Tanzania (Leendertse 1990). We found only one group of women, on Busisi beach near Mwanza town, actively pursuing this strategy. Women are generally distrustful of credit, although as a group they are a much better credit risk (Masaiganah 1992). They may also be distrustful of talking about credit, hence introducing a downward bias into our own observations.

The Busisi group began in 1993 and had been operating for nine months when we arrived. At that time, the group operated as many as six credit circles simultaneously. Each week every person contributed a set amount of money which was given to one of them on a rotating basis to use as capital for their business. Each circle could include up to 10 women and any woman could participate in as many as she wanted to and could afford. The group with the lowest contribution contributed one dollar per week, while the one with the highest contributed five dollars per week. In the nine months they had been operating they had experienced only one theft in the form of a woman who left the village after receiving her turn. The Busisi group helped each other with more than capital. They sold each other's fish when problems arose in someone's home and watched each other's children.

Fishing communities along the lake shore fit into two ideal types—the settled village in which mainly local residents fish and the fish camp where fishers live in temporary accommodations. These ideal types should not be drawn too starkly. In the settled villages fishing is a very important part of reproducing some households. Symmetrically, the same individuals often inhabit fish camps for extended periods, cultivating gardens and nearby fields. Of the communities that we visited, five are settled villages with active fishing, two are entirely fish camps and two are settled villages that contain fish camps.

Life for women in fish camps varies. The two fish camps we visited are very different sorts of communities, but they are alike in one crucial demographic respect: the vast majority of both populations are young men. It is this shared fact that makes their contrast so startling.

One of the two fish camps is Rubiri, which is very crowded and urban. It is an island half a kilometre across and a kilometre long that holds at least 1000 people. It is more reminiscent of the gold-mining camps near the lake than of the other fishing settlements. The island has only one latrine and the sanitary situation is unpleasant. Fishers on Rubiri said that the island attracted trouble makers. Rubiri is very noisy at night, with many bars and carousing young men. During the three weeks we were there, there were several fights and severe public beatings of miscreants by the village government. Although a few fishers had families with them, most said they would never bring their

wives to a place like Rubiri. Many women on the island are single, and come to provide various services for the fishers.

Nkome is just as much a fish camp as Rubiri, but its involvement in the international market is not nearly as great. The buildings are all made of temporary materials save for one small store, but several families live there together. Nkome is much cleaner than Rubiri. The sanitary infrastructure that someone familiar with rural East Africa would expect to see, such as dish racks and latrines, is in place. An elderly respondent on a nearby farm related that the fish camp used to be seasonal and fishers would come without their families. He said, in fact, that women had been prohibited. In recent years the camp has become year round, families are present and ten-cell leaders, rather than just beach leaders, have been chosen.

The striking difference is at night. Nkome is much quieter. There is still a great deal of drinking, but it does not become carousing. We saw no serious fights or punishments. The women told us that the young men consistently treated them with respect. One said that she had been surprised, but that the way she was treated on Nkome was no different from "in a village."

We discussed the relative peace of Nkome in several conversations with residents, some of whom thought it remarkable as well. The boat owners claim most of the credit, and may be justified in doing so. They see themselves as responsible for the behaviour of their young crew. Some boat owners had brought the crew from distant homes and say that they must answer "to their fathers." One large difference is that on Rubiri crew members are much less likely to be related to the boat owner. Only one (3%) of our sample of 36 Rubiri crew members was a relative of the boat owner, while on Nkome it was 28 percent, a figure that suggests that there is a good chance that at least one member of a boat's crew will be a relative. Other economic and social gaps between the owners and crew are greater on Rubiri as well. The owners are wealthier and, on average, own much larger fishing operations. There are also many owners who came to the fishery as outside investors in response to the export demand, several of these being of an Arabic rather than African heritage. The lesson from this comparison of two beaches is that increased commodification in the fishery not only affects women directly through economic pressures. It changes their lives, and the lives of their communities, indirectly through changes in social relationships that the increasingly stratified industry brings with it.

The Households

Female-headed Households

Female-headed households are disproportionately represented in the fishing industry (Table 1). This was found true in Kenya (Yongo 1991) and in Tanzania, where it is particularly the case for women over 40 (Masaiganah 1992).

The reasons for this are not mysterious. Smith and Stevens' (1988) investigation of female-headed households in the Bukoba area found that these households have severe agricultural disadvantages: smaller plots; insecure tenure; less access to hired labour, agricultural inputs and information; and fewer opportunities to generate capital. We found no significant difference in the average number of dependent children (three) or the average years of education (also three) between women in female-headed and couple-headed households. Fish trading is an opportunity for divorced or deserted women in a region where they have limited property rights (Croll 1981). Of the 195 women in our sample, 22 were divorced or separated; of those, one woman said she received $50 and the rest continued their lives divorced and penniless.

Table 1
Type of Off-farm Activity Engaged in by Women by Type of Household

	Type of Off-farm Economic Activity			
	Fish-related	Not fish-related	Only farming	All
Female-headed household	35%	11%	7%	12%
Married women	65%	89%	93%	88%
N	26	63	101	190

Notes: Chi square = 14.98 with 2 degrees of freedom; p = .0006. Women active in both fishing and non-fishing off-farm activities were classified as being fish-related. Data is missing for five women. Note that 32% of women doing non-fish-related work and 50% of those not engaged in off-farm activities are the wives of fishers.

Table 1 describes the type of non-farm activity engaged in by women from female-headed households. The fish-related activities are trading and processing fish, and in one case owning a boat. All the traders were independent, but fishers employed seven of the processors to sun dry dagaa. The other off-farm activities were of various types. They included running small tea shops, cooking and selling rice cakes and other snacks and running small shops. Fish-related activities clearly provide an important opportunity for these women. While they participate in other types of off-farm activities in proportion to their overall number in the population, they are underrepresented in agriculture and they are overrepresented in fish-related work.

The stories of two female household heads illustrate these statistics.

Mama Mwili lives in Guta, a beach on Speke Gulf that is central to the fish trade. She was married from 1961 through 1979 when she divorced. The reason she gives for the divorce is that her husband was not happy with her chronic poor health.

Mama Mwili moved to Guta after her divorce and began to support herself by making "local brew," an inexpensive mead. Within a year she began to invest

in fishing gear. She bought twine and made two fishing nets that she gave to a fisher in return for a share of the catch. She quickly discovered that this was a difficult arrangement to enforce. The man to whom she was renting the gears was selling the catch to other fishers on the lake and underreporting the catch to her.

She decided to buy hooks and a line and hire a second man to work with her in addition to the first. This arrangement seemed to work for the first year, until the first fisher reported that her nets had been stolen. Not long after this, the second reported that her hooks and line had been lost in the water. This was the end of her fishing. Mama Mwili turned from fishing to processing fish, processing cassava and carrying these items to sell in distant markets.

Another woman in Guta who became directly involved in fishing is Mama Tatu. She was born in 1946 and married at the age of 12. She suffered two stillbirths before finally giving birth to her first child after 14 years of marriage. After having this one son she was unable to have any more children. Her husband divorced her because of this infertility, combined with general ill health.

Mama Tatu is involved in many enterprises. She farms. She built three houses with money she earned from selling cotton and now rents two of them. She also sells cassava and maize flour and smokes fish. She became involved in fishing, when she convinced her grown son, who was working in Dar es Salaam, to send her 10 fishing nets. This was in 1992, just after the profitability of the Nile perch fishery had peaked. She supplied her nets to a fishing boat in return for a share of the catch. After four months the boat owner told her that five of her nets had been stolen.

She decided that she would employ her brother's son to help her with the fishing. She brought him to stay in her house and work on her remaining nets. The young man was unreliable, he would fish but then refuse to give her the proceeds; sometimes he would come home with nothing. Her experiences with fishing have led her to decide to concentrate on farming. In spite of the danger of drought, she feels that fishing is too unpredictable.

Mama Mwili and Mama Tatu's stories illustrate how much flexibility a single woman needs to make a living by Lake Victoria. They have to be able to shift from one risk-filled way of surviving to the next. The stories illustrate that precarious health, to which their poverty and marginality contributes, is an important source of risk, not only to their bodies but to their social relationships. Fish-related activities provide several options—and so make a major contribution to the flexibility they need. Men, however, still dominate these activities. This domination, in combination with the basic geographical facts that make fishing such a difficult thing to oversee, can make fish-related activities a dangerous option for women.

Couple-headed Households

Households around Lake Victoria are fluid entities with constant movement in and out of people sharing various relations. Co-wives often live together in a homestead, a complex called an *mji* in Swahili. Commonly the husband/father

allocates the land between co-wives and other relatives who may be present, but there are also *mji* lands on which everyone works (Kazimoto 1991).

One surprising result is that, unlike many other fishing communities around the world, fishing enterprises on Lake Victoria do not commonly involve husbands working with their wives. We found no significant relationship between a woman being the wife of a fisher and her being engaged in fish-related businesses.

Our data show husbands getting the money from 83% of the economic activities in which women participated. This includes agricultural activities, but does not differentiate types of agricultural activities. When wives control their own resources they must spend their money on the household, while husbands are not so constrained (Potash 1985; Safilios-Rothschild 1990; Smith and Stevens 1988).

Women do most of the field work and are involved in many practical decisions about the household and farm (Fortmann 1979). In our survey we asked respondents about who decided household issues. These responses are reported in Table 2.

What is interesting is the extent to which the responses converge. Save for the question about businesses, which is not precisely the same for the two populations, the numbers are remarkably close. The statistically significant differences are that men do not report that their wives are the sole decision makers in matters of crops, children's education and helping relatives to the same extent that women do. The only other difference is that more men see themselves as sole decision makers about the children's education. Even these differences are not large. Perceptions of who is making these decisions are not greatly different between men and women.

These data do not necessarily reflect the decision-making patterns in particular households. At the level of individual households the data in Table 2 lose their focus. As these relationships are created across time in concrete, day-to-day decisions, the categories lose the definition they have when the questions are abstractly placed. Survey questions and answers are a discourse. They are not the same discourse as deciding what will be for dinner. A wife may not ask her husband what he wants for dinner after he has just been difficult about what crops to plant. This does not mean that they are not able to reveal what people see as a general pattern.

These questions were asked of both partners of a couple in 14 instances. The couples' constructions of their own households' decision-making processes agree about half the time. Among these 28 people, three patterns of agreement and disagreement never emerge and we can infer that they are rare. One of these is one of three possible forms of agreement: both people never agree that the wife is a sole decision maker about some arena. We also never see two of the six possible forms of disagreement. No husband says that he makes the decisions about some arena while his wife says that she makes the

decisions. Second, no husband says that his wife makes the decisions while his wife says that they share them.

Table 2
Percentage Who Decide . . .

The person who decides . . .	Husband	Both together	Wife	N
Women's responses				
what food will be cooked	58	31	11	163
what business ventures the wife will pursue	45	41	14	163
what crops to plant	30	56	14	162
children's education	31	62	7	135
children's punishment	25	68	7	137
helping relatives	23	70	7	163
Men's responses				
what food will be cooked	60	33	7	123
what business ventures the husband will pursue	65	32	3	134
what crops to plant	36	57	7	133
children's education	44	56	0	119
children's punishment	22	69	9	111
about helping relatives	28	71	1	133

When we combine these data with discussions and observations in the villages, what emerges is a picture of gender relationships in transition. The expectation of male domination is being challenged, and women's status in the household is slowly shifting. There is a norm that most decisions are to be made by the couple together, but women's participation is still considered, particularly by the men, to be at men's sufferance. As Masaiganah (1988) observes, in Tanzania improving the status of women "is still considered by the majority to be a special favour to them" (1988:2).

The next four tables help illuminate the importance of the fish business for married women. Table 3 reports from whom, if anyone, women got money to start their off-farm, economic activity. It shows only two important sources of funds: husbands and other women.

Table 4 shows that one implication of a woman getting help from her husband in starting an off-farm business is that she is much more likely to be required to hand the profits over to him. We should note that the variable used is who spent the money, not who participated in deciding how to spend the money. The results are clear: if a woman received the money to start a business from her husband, the husband is much more likely to be the one who spends the profits. It is also revealing that more than a third of the women who started the business without their husbands' help also gave them the profits.

Table 3
Sources of Funds for Women's Business Ventures

Source	Percentage citing source
Husband	51
No one	33
Female relative	8
Female friend	3
Parent(s)	1
Male relative	1
Male friend	1
Group	1
Local CCM Party Official	1
N	75

Note: N = Total number of different sources of help cited by women regardless of number of businesses.

Table 4
Relationship Between Receiving Husband's Help in Starting an Activity and Keeping the Money from the Activity: Women's Off-farm Economic Activities

	Did wife receive husband's help when starting the activity?	
	No	Yes
Person who spent the money		
Husband	36%	85%
Wife	64%	15%
N	31	39

Notes: Chi square = 15.39 with 2 degrees of freedom; p = .0005. The unit of analysis is the activity. Nine respondents listed three activities, including work on their own farm, 73 listed two activities and 108 listed one. "Spent by wife" shows that some money from the activity was reported as spent by the wife, even if the husband spent some money from the activity. Eight activities generated no funds; we failed to get data on who spent the money for five activities.

As many scholars have pointed out, even when the woman spends the money, the husband may be leaving her to care for the household, while he spends other money on what he pleases (Potash 1985; Safilios-Rothschild 1990; Smith and Stevens 1988). Women often subsidize their husband's bachelor goods even when the money is kept in their hands. Moreover, Wamalwa (1989) found a pattern among the Wakamba in central Kenya in which women use their surplus for the community, while men invest privately, thus increas-

ing gender stratification. Nevertheless, a woman holding money still has more bargaining power within the household than a woman who does not (Holmboe-Ottesen and Wandel 1992). Several women, however, took pains to set straight the outside researchers who sometimes seemed intent on asking questions about how terrible their husbands were. It is true that many women on the shores of Lake Victoria are caught in bad marriages with lazy drunks. It is also true that custom and social structure give men permission, and even encouragement, to behave in repressive and irresponsible ways vis-à-vis their families. On the other hand, many women have responsible partners and live in households where decisions really are made together.

Tables 5 and 6 explore the relationship between husbands and types of off-farm economic activities. Table 5 shows two things. The first is that off-farm economic activities in general contribute to women's independent control of resources. The second is that fish-related activities contribute to this independence to a greater degree than do non-fish-related activities.

Table 5
Whether or Not Proceeds of an Activity Were Spent by Husband, by Type of Activity for Respondents Living with a Husband

	Type of off-farm economic activity		
	Fish-related	Not fish-related	None (farming)
Person who spent the money			
Husband	47%	67%	94%
Wife	53%	31%	6%
N	19	51	135

Notes: Chi square = 36.99 with 2 degrees of freedom; p = .0000. The unit of analysis is the economic activities of women living with a husband. Eight activities were reported to generate no funds; data on who spent the money is missing for five activities.

Table 6 profiles the relationship between the type of off-farm activity and receiving start-up money for that activity from a husband. Those who are not involved in fish-related activities are more likely to have received start-up money from their husbands.

Tables 4, 5 and 6 taken together reveal a clear pattern. Women engaged in economic activities are often operating as their husband's agents. They receive resources from their husbands who then receive the proceeds. For reasons that are not entirely clear to us, married women engaged in fish-related activities are likely to operate more autonomously. The stronger relationship is between providing capital and receiving the proceeds.[3] Husbands for whom wives are playing the role of an economic agent seem reluctant to set them up in fish-related businesses.

Table 6
Relationship Between Receiving Husband's Help in Starting an Activity and Type of Women's Non-farm Economic Activity

	Type of off-farm activity	
	Fish-related	Not fish-related
Did wife receive husband's help when starting the activity?		
No	62%	37%
Yes	38%	63%
N	21	62

Notes: Chi square = 2.99 with 2 degrees of freedom; p = .08. The unit of analysis is the activity.

One possible explanation is surveillance. Fish-related activities keep women moving between the fish landings, processing areas and marketing areas. This may reduce the ability of husbands to superintend the activity, at least in comparison to cooking and selling rice cakes or running a store, which are more sedentary. This may discourage husbands from funding these activities. Years ago, men did not allow women to do any petty trading, but now they see it as a source of income (Masaiganah 1992). Fish-related work may be more attractive to women in certain types of marriages. Gerrard (1992) argued that fish traders in Tarime tend to be women with more co-wives, older husbands and/or husbands living elsewhere.

The story of Mama Mmoja provides illustration.

> Mama Mmoja lives in Esegere, a small Muslim fishing community in Tarime District, near the Kenya border. She is 30 and has five children. She was married when she was 16 to a man who was already married. But she considers herself the first wife, because the other woman's parents never received a bride price from the husband.
>
> She describes her husband as lazy. He does not farm. He sends his fishing crew out by themselves and spends his own time "choosing where he will go to take his meals."
>
> Her husband set her and her co-wife up in a small tea shop close to the fishing beach. The wives alternated operating the shop in weekly shifts. They were expected to provide for their own consumption from the profits they made during their shift.
>
> Mama Mmoja turned to her brother in Musoma town for help. Her brother bought her five pressure lamps and five nets for fishing dagaa. She invested this equipment in her husband's fishing operation and this arrangement was successful for a while. Then her husband went to fish on Ukerewe Island and he stayed there for months without sending her share of the proceeds. During the same pe-

riod the tea shop business folded because neither wife could make the reinvestment necessary to keep in going. They were left to rely entirely on farming.

When her husband returned from Ukerewe, he had another wife who had two children by another man. The fish caught in Mama Mmoja's fishing nets was supporting the whole family, including her co-wives and their children. She took her five pressure lamps and two fishing nets, and now she has rented them to another fisher for what she considers good terms. The other three nets remain with her husband and she considers this a bad investment because of his laziness. Although she knew she would gain nothing, she decided to leave these nets with him to "comfort" him and insure peace in the family.

Turning again to her brother, Mama Mmoja got enough money to start the hotel business again. Her brother had also agreed to take her firstborn so that she could go to primary school. When she completed primary school, the brother wanted to continue to help her go to secondary school. Her husband refused, and sent a letter to the brother demanding his daughter's return. When she returned, he married her to a man of 46 in return for a bride price of 10 cows, 5 goats and 30 dollars. "I was confused," she said, "and my daughter had to agree for fear of her father. I cried because my daughter was very young and without an education probably will not be able to help me nor herself."

For Mama Mmoja access to fishing is an important resource. She needs to be able to have several different ways of protecting her own and her children's livelihood. Drawing on her bonds with her brother is clearly important. Even with outside help, fishing is a way she can put the small amount of help he can provide to good use. It gives her a measure of independence and flexibility in dealing with her husband, and proves an important bargaining chip. As Table 3 makes clear, however, male relatives are not a common source of this kind of aid.

Conclusion

Changes in the Lake Victoria ecosystem have increasingly marginalized economic opportunities available to women. This is not because of the changes themselves, but rather because of women's disadvantages in the day-to-day negotiations that determine how lake-side people will respond to the changes. Women have experienced a loss of access to the species that they once processed, and even fished for, while gaining access to the newer species has proved difficult. They have been faced with greater need for capital, powerful competition for fish procurement and even the active resistance of men. Areas that they have carved out for themselves in the new fisheries, fish racks and swim bladders, are now being threatened. The fisheries management measures that are going into place are making it more difficult for them to get fish.

These women are not giving up. Their responses are increasingly articulated at the community level. They help each other, often almost in spite of outside efforts to get them to do so. While revolving credit groups have been slower to start on the lake than elsewhere, they are coming into being. They offer pre-

cisely what the women need to deal with the new fisheries—flexible access to credit.

Access to the fish is very important to these women. It is not simply another economic option, although that alone would be very important. Fish are a resource that provides greater economic independence than others do. The fish business is an alternative to agriculture for single women with diminished access to land and other inputs, and it is an avenue of increased independence for married women.

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Notes

1. The importance of international and national markets mean that wider scales are also crucial. We address them at the level of the lake.
2. We use the inclusive term "fisher" throughout the article. The reader should understand that, with the exception of the ill-fated women's group discussed on p. 158, women do not go out fishing on the lake. A few do, however, own fishing boats and other gear. Some women fish for small species from the shore.
3. While space precludes a full report of the results, in a logistical regression of "fish-related business" and "husband as source of capital" on "control of proceeds" only "husband as source of capital" remains significant.

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NO PLACE FOR WIMPS: WORKING ON WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TRAWLERS

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Abstract: This article is part of a larger project, undertaken as a doctoral thesis, analyzing gender relations in the Western Australian fishing industry. The article is based on qualitative research and the primary focus is the sexual division of labour on prawn and scallop trawlers. Few women own or operate boats or companies and I argue that the trawler, as a worksite, is dominated by a competitive and aggressive heterosexual masculinity that sustains an inequitable division of labour.

Résumé: Cet article fait partie d'un plus grand projet (thèse de doctorat en cours) qui analyse les relations entre les sexes dans l'industrie des pêches en Australie occidentale. Dans cet article, il s'agit d'une recherche qualitative dont l'objet principal est la division sexuelle du travail sur les chalutiers pour la pêche aux crevettes et aux pétoncles. Peu de femmes possèdent ou font marcher des bateaux ou des compagnies de pêche. Par conséquent, l'argument proposé est celui qui dit que le chalutier, comme lieu de travail, est dominé par une masculinité hétérosexuelle agressive et compétitive qui contribue au maintien d'une division inéquitable de travail.

Introductory Remarks

In 1995 I conducted qualitative research on the work experiences of women and men associated with the prawn and scallop trawlers of the Shark Bay fishery in the north of Western Australia. The research was conducted in preparation for a doctoral thesis on the labour of women in the Western Australian fishing industry. Throughout the industry there is a vertical and horizontal sexual division of labour, and few women own or operate boats or companies. This is due to the industry being dominated by a competitive, aggressive and heterosexual masculinity. Many women have worked on the trawlers, but men resist their incursion by fetishizing the occupation, exaggerating the hazardous nature of the work and living an alienating lifestyle.

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Methodology

Using a "snowballing" technique, I tape-recorded 60 interviews with skippers, cooks, deckhands, wives and partners of fishers, trawling company administrators, staff from the Western Australian Fisheries Department and WorkSafe (Western Australia's Occupational Health and Safety Department). A conversational style of interviewing with prompts was used to highlight issues relating to work experiences and gender relations. In-depth interviews were conducted with 10 men and 12 women who have worked on the trawlers, and this information has been combined with notes from conversations and observations made when I went on board some of the fishing vessels. Most of the research was undertaken in Carnarvon, the port from which fishers work the Shark Bay fishery. Some interviews were conducted while boats were undergoing a refit in Fremantle, which is Western Australia's main port and home to many boat owners, fishers and their families. Of the women interviewed, two (described by other fishers as female "pioneers" and "legends" in the prawning industry) used to be skippers but are now employed on land. Ten other women have worked as cook/deckhands, and four of these ceased work after marrying the skipper. One woman was sitting her Marine Engine Driver's ticket, two were working up their sea-time in order to undertake formal training and three had decided not to continue in the industry.

Background

Carnarvon is 1000 kilometres from the capital city of Perth and the port of Fremantle. It is an isolated and small rural coastal town in the Gascoyne Region of the North West adjacent to the Shark Bay fishing grounds. Shark Bay is in an area prone to tropical cyclones, and includes the most westerly point of mainland Australia. It supports a wide variety of marine life: dugongs, humpback whales, dolphins and other plant and animal life, which led to its declaration as a World Heritage area in 1991. By 1993 there were 10 beach seine and 5 wet-line licences operating in the Bay as well as 27 prawn and 14 scallop trawlers. The town's main source of income are the $A70 to $A100 million dollar per annum fisheries developed since the early 1960s to meet the demands of an overseas luxury seafood market. The population of the region is 10 000, and about 8 percent are Aboriginal people (Gascoyne Development Commission 1995). Aboriginal people have traditionally fished the tidal creeks and shoreline of the area, and were involved in the 19th-century establishment of the pearling industry. A few families have also operated wetliners, but historically Aboriginal people have been excluded from the major commercial fisheries, especially trawling (Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories 1995:26). The population increases between March and November with an influx of tourists and itinerant seasonal workers including fishers.

In 1995 there were approximately 30 side trawlers working the Shark Bay area, 14 owned by one large processing company and the others owned by smaller companies, families or individuals with one to four trawlers. Skippers, including those employed by companies, have the responsibility for employing their own crew. The crew of a trawler can be a close-knit group of friends or relatives or a disparate group of itinerant workers. The seasonal nature of the work, the isolation of the town and the need to be at sea for long periods influences the availability of experienced crew members, and there is a high turnover. It is relatively easy for a visitor in the town to get work on a boat simply by walking up to the wharf and asking. The industry attracts casual labourers with no previous or familial links to fishing, and many are not interested in a fishing career. They are mostly Anglo-Australians who have been unable to get work elsewhere, or people who work for a short period to earn the money to put themselves through university, purchase some capital item or establish a small business. Some are local or international travellers, commonly referred to as backpackers, working their way around Australia. Others simply have a sense of adventure, are running away from personal problems or even the law. People who wish to achieve a more permanent career in the industry, especially as skippers, can earn themselves a good reputation within the community by living permanently in the town with their families or returning year after year to work the same boat. Deckhands mostly come from outside the town, but may also work for the same people each year, work up their sea time and study for their skipper tickets; Master Class IV or V and/or Marine Engine Driver tickets.

A number of skippers and deckhands leave their families hundreds or even thousands of miles away while they work the seasons, and can be away for as long as 10 months of the year. The prawn season at Shark Bay is from March until November, and the boats stay at sea for three weeks at a time, only coming in on the full moon for a few days. This is in accordance with Fisheries Department regulations, but it also provides some rest and recreation for the crew. The scallop season is slightly different and the boats only come in to unload; once a week or every three weeks. There is a belief within the community, expressed by business people, public servants and some skippers and their wives, that the itinerant fishermen—mostly single men who live at backpackers' hostels or in the hotels between trips—constitute a "rough element" and give the industry a bad name. When the fishers are "in on the moon," the usual number of police in the town is increased from 30 to 40 or 45.

The trawlers operate on a share basis, and contractual agreements vary considerably. Some workers board the boats with only a vague verbal agreement, but there is a general view that the pay is good. Given that a weekly income for those other than the skipper may average out at only $A1000, and costs to cover stores and the running of the boat, as well as insurance and tax have to

be deducted, it is really no better than many other forms of casual labour. If the catch is down the pay can be very poor, and some inexperienced workers, especially women and backpackers from a non-English-speaking background, find they have worked only for the cost of their food. They are referred to as "tucker deckies" and the situation is justified on the grounds that they are undergoing informal training. The more experienced deckhands and skippers earn a much higher percentage of the catch; between $A20 000 and $A100 000 each season.

Most fishers have been trained "on the job," but a recent spate of fatal accidents has resulted in increased attempts to provide and encourage formal training. These initiatives, primarily implemented to "meet the needs of the industry," are still in an experimental phase. There has never been a fishermen's union in Western Australia, and any suggestion that there should be is resisted by both individual fishers and owners or operators of boats. The individualistic itinerant and seasonal workers have little desire or opportunity to build workers' solidarity through joining a trade union. Those with the potential to make a career of fishing aspire to owning and operating their own boats and join professional fishers' associations formed to protect the interests of fishers as self-employed businessmen or employers of labour. The peak organization representing these fishers is committed to maintaining a "union-free" industry.[1]

Women on Boats

There are no statistics available to confirm the actual numbers of people who crew on trawlers in any one season, but my estimate, based on interviewing the major employers in Carnarvon, is that more than 300 people were employed in the 1995 season. During the month that I sought these figures there were probably only three women actually working on a boat. A few others had been employed during the season, but only for short periods of time. It was repeatedly suggested to me that there used to be more women, and a few female skippers, but that "women can't stick it." Although I was given the names of 10 women who had operated trawlers, I met no woman currently employed in Western Australia as a skipper.

Women can only get work on the trawlers if they are invited on board by skippers who like to have at least one woman in the crew. Some are blatant about expecting them to work as cooks and keep the boat clean, because the men refuse such demeaning "women's work." Others expect them to work as the "wheelhouse whore" or a moral guardian exerting a "civilizing" influence on the men. Several men interviewed said women were less likely to get drunk and are better to talk to because "you get sick of all that ockerism after a while."[2] Some skippers also claim that women are better than men, because many seasonal workers, whether overseas backpackers or itinerant Australian

workers, have no interest in developing a career in the industry. Women who have an interest in a career are described as more conscientious and reliable, because they have to work so hard to prove themselves. Women, only two or three out of 13 crew members, are more frequently employed on the scallop trawlers. Scallops used to be brought in shore to be shucked by women in processing plants, but since the 1980s this has been done at sea so that a greater amount of meat can be brought in. On prawn trawlers, where there is a crew of five, the product is not processed but bagged and frozen whole. If grading (sizing the prawns) is undertaken and there is a woman on board, then she is more likely than the men to be grading.

The main reason women are invited onto boats, however, is so that they can cook for the crew. One woman, who started her career as a cook and skippered prawn trawlers during the 1970s and 1980s, suggested that this was an "advantage" women had over "boys" as they could use it as a "kind of apprenticeship." However, there is a danger for women in this strategy because they are expected to do all the domestic service work, including providing emotional and sexual labour, and find it difficult to work their way up. If they also work as sorters and graders of the product this only increases their hours and their work load. The men go to bed, but the women clean up afterwards. Even women who undertake some formal deckhand training prior to taking work on a boat find they are still expected to go on as cooks. It is assumed that as women they have the "natural" skills for servicing the crew. Men are not expected to have this skill and are taken on because they are assumed to have a "natural" capacity for manual labour and for learning the skills to operate the boat and the gear. Being invited on to cook is therefore not an advantage that women might have over the men, but many accept it as the only way to get work on the boats.

Lester, a skipper for 20 years, acknowledged that the men on the boats give women a "terrible time," and stated that fishermen do not know anything about equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policies or legislation. He emphasized the point that "they make sure they don't." Other fishers interviewed about women working on boats used the dualistic and contradictory discourses of "equal opportunities" and "practical considerations" (Wetherell, Stiven and Potter 1987:61). They claimed that women "should be given a fair go," or "could work as good as a man," and then countered this by justifying their subordinate role on boats with biological or naturalistic assumptions about their inferior strength, ability to "hunt," and their predisposition for coping with boring repetitive work such as cooking, cleaning or processing. They also said that women should not expect to be treated any differently from the men, but then went on to describe just how differently they were treated. Bluey, who is not a qualified skipper and has only a few years experience on trawlers, tends to speak and act as though he is the skipper. He said

that as far as he was concerned, when "a girl gets on a boat . . . she's not a girl no more she's just a deckie." He also said, "a girl can drive a boat just as good as a bloke can . . . although [when I work with a woman] . . . I reckon I am the captain and she's the crew, and that's the way it is. . . ."

Some women willingly settle into a subordinate, "housewife" role, enter into relationships with the crew or marry a fisherman. Shipboard romances can be temporary, short-lived or even multiple, but some are based on a mutual commitment and undertaken because both partners enjoy the lifestyle. Such couples take advantage of accumulating two shares of the catch to establish a home and a family business. But the woman's fishing career then becomes intermittent or ceases altogether as she meets the demands of running the business and being "mother and father" to the children. Some have taken small children on boats with them. Ray and Gail informed me that they had strapped their baby in a motor vehicle safety seat in the wheelhouse; others referred to having used netting to fence off an area on the deck especially for children, but this requires a lot of co-operation on the part of the skipper and crew. Most women find it is easier to bring up children on the land.

For a woman to use her experience as a cook and move into full-time deckwork or qualify as a Marine Engine Driver or Master of a vessel, she has to ally herself with a skipper, prove herself "better than the men" and treat them as her mates. In Australia, being a mate implies that one adheres to a code of conduct based on equality and friendship—among *men*. For a woman to be referred to as a mate she would have to prove to the men that she was "one of the boys" and demonstrate complete loyalty towards them as men and work mates. She may then be successful in demanding a more equal share of the manual work and a higher percentage of the catch, but it is a tenuous position for a woman because in the eyes of the men she can never really be a mate since she is not a man. Women have to constantly be on their guard because those who prove themselves competent fishers claim "the men will try anything," even sabotaging the fishing operation when a woman is driving the boat. With or without a male mentor, the women have to "learn how to handle the men" and stand up to them. Sandy stated that

> Some men think they got a job and it's theirs and no one else can do it—I tell 'em they gotta share—I can pull up the winch and shoot away as good as they can, if not better. And if they expect me to be the only cook doing all the washin' they are sadly mistaken. I tell 'em, I'm not your mother, we share it. If I cook you wash. . . .

If the men complained about her cooking Sandy said, "If you want a feed get it yourself." After her first season as a cook she convinced the skipper that she wanted to learn about the engine and that for safety reasons it was important for her to learn how to drive the boat. When men "muscled" in on her to prove how tough they were lifting giant sea sponges, sting rays or sharks, she

pointed out that they would do themselves an injury, and told them, "we gotta winch—use it!" She said, "It's all up here," and implied that women were more willing to use their brains than men. Sandy's skipper now backs her if she has a dispute with the crew because she has proved herself better than many of the men. She acts as his mate in both senses of the word—second in charge and a workmate.

The sexual division of labour on the trawlers can be very much like that in a family household. Women as cooks work either as the married partners of the skippers, or act as though they are by providing domestic, sexual and/or emotional labour. If they do other work they may still be in a "helpmeet" or assistant role, providing service to the skipper, the Master of the boat. As Rosemary Pringle (1988:28-56) notes, this sort of relationship is common in the workplace and maintains unequal gender relations. Like the boss and secretary, doctor and nurse partnership, the relationship mirrors that of a complementary heterosexual couple working in a team as husband and wife or mother and father. Cynthia Cockburn (1991:142) points out that under the "original terms of the sexual contract a woman's proper place is at home. If she is drawn into the paid workplace, then her proper place is in clearly-defined women's work at or near the bottom of the organization."

Sexuality

The trawler is a highly sexualized workplace. Crew referred to fishermen "getting an enormous horn while hunting prawns," men and women admitted to indulging in "terrible orgies," protecting the skipper's wife from the knowledge that he was "banking the cook" and enjoying working in the sunshine in their underwear. Gender and sexuality are, as Pringle (1988:84) points out, central in all workplace power relations. She adds that:

> Far from being marginal to the workplace, sexuality is everywhere. It is alluded to in dress and self-presentation, in jokes and gossip, looks and flirtations, secret affairs and dalliances, in fantasy, and in the range of coercive behaviours that we now call sexual harassment. (Pringle 1988:90)

The implications of Pringle's arguments are that, rather than "banning" sexuality from the workplace or relying on legislation to protect women from sexual harassment, women should be empowered so that sexuality is a mutually pleasurable part of one's working life. She suggests that women assert their own sexuality and engage in subversive strategies to turn the tables on the men (Pringle 1988:250-266). Some of the women I interviewed, or observed on the boats, did flaunt their sexuality, play with it or use it to their advantage, but others resented being drawn into heterosexual games and were oppressed by the men's sexuality. As cooks, deckhands or skippers, and regardless of how good a rapport they had with the men, all of the women I interviewed had

either experienced or witnessed sexual harassment. Men used their sexuality to threaten, intimidate, control and dominate women, and women used different strategies for dealing with it. Some confronted it, some lodged complaints, some even acquiesced, but others simply left. No matter what strategy was used there was no guarantee it would work.

When I first met Elaine, playing pool in a hotel bar with fishermen she worked with, I asked her what it was like working on a fishing boat. Her response was, "It's not the work that's hard, it's the sexual harassment." She regarded the men as her mates and thought she could fit in by being "tough"; dressing in shearers' boots and a lumberjack's shirt, drinking with the "boys" and using their crude language. She had worked on two boats during the 1995 season, and the first skipper had told her she was a good worker and could come back to work for him the following season. The second skipper taunted, teased and verbally abused her, put her down and "hassled her out." When she attempted to lodge a complaint with the company management she was told that if she could not get on with one skipper, then she would not be able to work with any others. This was despite the fact that the company had recently issued a policy statement, a token one-liner, stating that sexual harassment would not be tolerated on its boats. When I interviewed management, they denied any knowledge of the incident. The first skipper closed ranks with the other one and persuaded Elaine to drop the complaint. She said, "they really had me by the balls." I observed Elaine's male crew mates in the hotel telling her that she had to learn to play the game. She had tried desperately to fit in, boasting to me of having spent $A800 on "piss" in the pub, but she could never be "one of the boys," and in trying to assert her rights as a woman she demonstrated to the men that she was not their mate either.

Sandy is a woman who would prefer to stand up to the men and confront the situation rather than lodge a complaint. She told me how she dealt with "a guy who put the hard word" on her. She said:

> One night this guy was giving me the shits and I was that pissed off with him I walked outa my room and said you say that to me one more time I'm gonna stab ya . . . and he said oh yeah? an' he went off at me one more time and I went into the galley, and you know those big knives in the movies—I grabbed that and he went out of the galley and shut the door.

Sandy then humiliated this man in front of the other men by calling him back to remind him that he was on kitchen duty. She said, "I thought right, I'll get him. Give me the shits, I'll give him the dishes." Sandy survives quite well in this environment; she treats the men as her mates and enjoys sexual power games with them. She claims women have more sexual power than men and should use it. She says, "they think they're such ladies' men," and teases them about it. When they have been into town "on the moon" and not been successful in "getting a lay," she tells them she's only got to snap her fingers

and she can choose from half a dozen men. Sandy has a strong sense of her own sexuality and enjoys "giving as good as she gets." She seems to find it easier to assert herself than some of the other women. She lives in the town with her "bikie" husband and rides a Harley Davidson, which she rebuilt herself. She says her father taught her mechanical skills and that she was brought up to "take no shit from no one." Other women flaunt their femininity and sexuality by working in their bikinis or walking around the deck naked amidst accusations that they "get off on the men's attention." I suspect that some do this to avoid being labelled lesbian or too "butch" or unfeminine, but others do it because they do wish to attract the attention of men and engage in relationships with them. One young woman, Nicky, who was very capable at doing the "hard yakka" on the deck, referred to taking time out for a bath, painting her toenails and "doing nice little things for the men." She was engaged in a sexual relationship with the second in charge, the Mate, and hoped one day to qualify herself, marry a good skipper and work towards establishing a business and a family. But when a younger deckhand joined the crew and "gave her a hard time," her boyfriend, Brett, refused to back her up. She said he told her it was not his problem and that she should handle it herself. She told me, "he just wanted to maintain that sort of steady-steady going between him and Adam—to make things easier for himself—so in that sort of case they really don't take a lot of notice of what's happening to the girls."

Women who objected to unwanted sexual attention or harassment frequently found that the men closed ranks against them when they complained, or joined in with the harassment. Even the skippers referred to as "good blokes" passively allowed it to go on by staying in the wheelhouse to let the crew "fight it out among themselves." This was justified by the need to have a compatible team working the boat. But it also meant that inexperienced or somewhat naïve young women were particularly vulnerable. No one ever asked them if they had been trained to cook, and they often had difficulty learning how to perform the manual labour. Men used the mistakes they made to justify throwing tantrums about the quality of the food, complaining about their work on the deck and threatening to throw them overboard if they did not meet sexual demands. Jan, an ex-skipper, recalled the following:

> I had a Dutch girl once, a cook, who was getting harassed by the only crew [member] I've ever sacked . . . but they all let it happen . . . everyone was sitting around one night on the anchor [drinking] and we were all singing and it was fine and then she went off to bed . . . in my cabin, and Syd went in and closed the door and she was just you know um, . . . started yelling "get out of here, get out of here," and they were all laughing and I just got up and . . . said to Jimmy, "I don't like this," . . . and so I stopped it. Made him get out of there, and Jimmy had a lot of respect for me too but you know even he [joined in] . . . that didn't ever happen again as I said, that was one night when I just saw it come out in them though, yeah.

Jan said she had worked her way up through choosing suitable mentors; Nicky and Sandy are attempting to do the same thing; but most women who complained or confronted the unequal division of labour, division of the catch or sexual harassment had more difficulty finding a mentor and adapting to the male camaraderie. A pattern I noticed in several interviews was that the man most likely to harass women on the boats was often the youngest and least experienced. Jan explained her involvement in such a situation:

> . . . a young bloke, came back on the boat when I knew the deck . . . had my side of the boat . . . and he actually picked up a lump of steel and [menaced me with it] . . . I just stood up to him . . . well then he didn't talk to me for . . . five or six weeks. . . . he was a tough little surfie nut . . . and they'll really zone in on the female of course, because they think she'll crumble first.

A young man like this may be expressing his frustration with being at the lower end of the hierarchy, but his actions also result in a consolidation of the dominant position of all the men on the boats as controllers of women and their workplace. As already noted in Elaine's case, it filtered up through to the company management and across to other boats. Cockburn points out that "Men's power in the extra-organizational world, in the family, the state and civil society, enters the workplace with them and gives even the most junior man a degree of *sexual* authority relative to even senior women" (Cockburn 1991:143). The women on the boats can become fair game for the "fraternal gang" and their best strategy for survival is to seek a male mentor but even then many are discouraged from seeking a career in fishing.

Several women told me similar stories and spoke about men throwing sea-snakes at them, "you know—one bite and you're dead, eh? . . . Big joke. . . ." The men also teased them by shooting at dolphins, cutting the fins off turtles to "teach them a lesson" and refusing to talk to them if they would not speak crudely or did not share the men's redneck ideals. One young woman who tried to turn the tables on such men by putting detergent in their cordial bottles was sacked because, as her senior deckhand told me, she was "dangerous . . . could have poisoned us all." Carol, a university student working her way around Australia, said, "it is all putdowns, shit, crap, sexual innuendos and direct, crude sexual demands." She was also put off the boat for being a trouble-maker when she complained. She was told that her 24-year-old tormentor, who had only a few months experience, could keep his job because he was a more "productive" worker than she was. Nicky dealt with the young man hassling her by refusing to talk to him or provide him with cups of coffee, but she would not use underhanded subversive strategies such as contaminating the men's food. She said, "you can't retaliate [like that] because the guys will actually turn around and lay into you—a lot of them have got no qualms about punching a girl," if she asserts herself.

If the harassment does not actually drive a woman off a boat, or she has no choice but to stay, it can seriously undermine her confidence and affect her health and ability to work. Carol and Nicky both recalled having violent dreams about how to cope with the men harassing them. Christine said she "felt like shit" following weeks of harassment. She was muscled out of the way when she tried to do anything on the deck, had the meals she cooked thrown into the sea and was verbally abused. Her hurt response caused her to lose face with the rest of the crew. She said, "I was basically just hiding from them and just doing my work and then not socializing with anyone else." She removed herself to the roof over the work deck and wrote in her journal:

> My stomach is in knots, I am so nervous, but I am trying to keep going. I am pathetic at this, I still can't get anything right. Kenny hates me, and I am trying to do the right thing by him but it is like talking to a brick wall. I am going to persevere and just try and try to do everything he tells me and not get aggro and defensive. I know now that he just gets a macho big click over telling me what to do and making life hard. He said his last cook got the same treatment so it's not personal. [I must] be positive, [but] I need to hide my feelings out here and just do what I have to do without losing my soul . . . I should be able to act it out . . . my new personality out here will have to be—initiative, obedience, strength, patience and tolerance [towards their attitudes and behaviour].

Christine had signed up for four months at sea on a vessel that rarely came into port. She was determined to get her fair share of the catch and had to accept the harassment, the longer working hours in the subordinate position as cook and part-time deckhand, as well as the smaller percentage of the catch. She resisted capitulating to sexual demands, risked losing her soul by ignoring the more blatant cruelty towards some of the sea creatures and eventually earned herself a bonus. This bonus she earned by allowing her labour to be incorporated into the workplace on the men's terms. She stated she would not work on a trawler again.

Sexual harassment is a masculine political weapon used to maintain male dominance in the workplace. In the fishing industry it can be used to maintain a workplace not "contaminated" by women. Some fishermen still claim the boat is no place for a woman, not because of old superstitions, although these may be invoked occasionally to justify exclusion, but because women as "The Sex" are seen as problematic (Cockburn 1991:159). They are feared because they are perceived as being either too sexy or not sexy enough (ibid.:150-151). Many fishermen and their wives expressed this view of women by stating that a flirtatious woman can come between a fisherman and his wife or cause trouble among the crew. A woman described as "too feminist" can cause conflict when she objects to sexual harassment or discrimination. But, as Cockburn points out, it is not women's sexuality that is problematic, it is men's. Some

fishermen made it clear that they regarded women as problematic simply because they were not men. Bluey stated:

> You know, if some of them'd had balls you'd a just kicked 'em all round the deck, mate, see that's where you gotta draw the line with women, if they're lazy and most of 'em are anyway—you [they] can't go round complaining about hours and safety issues—they're just useless and lazy you know. . . .

Bluey invokes biological difference to justify treating men and women differently. He uses verbal sexual abuse to deal with "lazy" women rather than physical abuse directed at men. He recalled threatening to "bait his hook with a cook to catch a shark," and continually referred to women as "useless cunts." Dishing out abuse is seen as a traditional right of the skipper, as the Master of a team of workers, and flows down through the hierarchy on the boat. Women are told not to take it personally; however, there is a difference between being yelled at for being a "lazy bastard" and being called a "useless cunt," especially when men use this latter expression to insult each other and imply that being female is despicable. It is directed at the centre of a woman's sexual identity; nothing could be more personal or indicative of the masculine view that women as "The Sex" are different from and inferior to men.

The experiences of the women I interviewed show that when women exercise their own sexual power to deal with sexual harassment on their own terms, use direct confrontation or subversive tricks, men continue to play power games that maintain their hierarchical positions. Whether a woman is driven out of the workplace by threats of sexual violence, sacked because she cannot or will not accommodate the demands of the men, the underlying assumption on the part of the men is that they have the right and the power to dictate the terms under which women may be incorporated into "their" masculine workplace. When women leave, this confirms the men's view that they are the superior workers—women are not tough enough. Carol, who lasted only eight days on a trawler, said she would not go to sea again because "you have to give so much, you lose so much of yourself—give up what you believe in . . . adapt, conform to them. They think they rule the world because they ride the high seas . . . they won't adapt to you."

The Masculine Lifestyle

The requirement for women to adapt was referred to by Bluey as "lovin' the lifestyle . . . as much as we do. . . ." He made it clear that he was not referring to fishing or being at sea. His lifestyle included working to the point of exhaustion, "without anybody having to tell you what to do . . . 24 hours a day," not "stopping for a yarn" while you work, nor admiring the scenery or the wildlife. Then you have to "unload the mind," go into the hotel on the moon to "have a fat time, . . . get pissed, have a fight, have a fuck, if you can get

one," and then "steam out" the next day with the heavy metal music blaring and "go back out there for another month." He added that ". . . you might be a bit drunk and a bit Sissy . . ." and "the DOHSWA [health and safety officers] mob are trying to cut that out," but "you need that sort of shit." "Anyway," he said, "everything's gonna be alright," because someone will be sober enough to drive while the others sleep it off.

Bluey stated that the fishing was "a pretty high risk sorta thing you know, like it's not for everyone," and listed hazardous work practices performed without life jackets or safety harnesses: "[you could] fall in the water, or get somethin' dropped onya, you get ate up by the winch or . . . fall outa the riggin', that'd be a bastard." He also described working on the otter boards that open the nets and are attached to the outriggers:

> . . . like it's, y'out on the boards and that . . . and that can be a bit hazardous, especially if you're out in the rough weather and stuff like that, cause you gotta sort of run out on the stick [gantry or boom] and climb down . . . and there's two boards that sort of bang together . . . they weigh about 250 kilos each . . . if there is a really bad swell, it'll sorta throw "em around and it's just um part of it. . . .

He listed "monsters" that came up in the net as by-catch such as manta rays with "thousands of tiny teeth" and jaws capable of "squashing your hand off" and the beaks of loggerhead turtles ". . . that'll just take your arm off . . . plus you got sea snakes and stories [stonefish], blue ring octopus and sharks and the little striped cobblers . . . sting ray barbs through your foot."[3] He went on and on, proving how tough he was, how hazardous the work was, and then added: ". . . it's not for wimps eh? . . . like it's a hard life, geez, mate, you only gotta check out my face you know, yeah you gotta be a hard cunt—it's the only way to put it—it's the sort of general drill on the boat—you either go hard or you go home, you know, that's it." *Go Hard or Go Home* is a common slogan fixed to the wall of the work area on boats, and yelled at people to encourage competition. The share system of paying skippers and crews contributes to this. The skipper makes an agreement with a company (if he is not running a company of his own) for a certain percentage of the catch and then allocates percentages to the crew. The percentages vary from about 5 to 20 percent, and may be negotiated while the work is under way or decided at the end of the trip. It is often not finalized for crew members, especially newcomers, before leaving port. It is therefore in the interests of the crew to prove themselves worthy of a "decent" share while at sea. If a man, for example, can demonstrate that a woman or a backpacker from overseas is not working hard enough, he can increase his share of the catch by decreasing the perceived worth of the other person. He will also display and assert his own superiority as a worker. As each crew member is drawn into this competition the catch and its value increases and so does the income of each individual crew, skipper and boat owner and/or owner of the company. The capital interest in

how well the trawler crews work together therefore interlocks with the interests of individual men who have fetishized their physical work situation to exclude competition from outsiders. This creates, attracts and supports a dominant male culture that believes that fishing is the work of "real men."

Bluey made it clear in his own words that he gets a "buzz" out of the "hazardness" and generally making it so hard that "women just can't handle it." He said: "... if it was easy, everybody would be doin' it, wouldn't they?" This clearly demonstrates the effort made to exclude others: women and men who complain about unhygienic, unfair and unsafe conditions, express an interest in carefully handling the by-catch in order to return it to the sea or refuse to be obsessive about hard physical labour. The men who complained about the attitudes of fishermen included an Anglo-Australian university student and seven backpackers from a non-English-speaking background. These men also complained about the amount of alcohol consumed, especially when compared with the quality of the food—"too many meat pies and red meat." They were also offended by what they referred to as narrow or intolerant ideas, in other words, the misogynist, homophobic and racist attitudes. Aboriginal people who operated a snapper boat with funding from the federal government were referred to by fishers as "lazy," or as members of the "most lazy race," because they did not work all day and all night every day of the week. Sandy said that fishers had attempted to sabotage this boat by cutting the bilge lines, and told her they had done it "because the niggers shouldn't have a boat like that."

In presenting himself as a rugged individual who "needed nothing and no one," Bluey denied feeling physical or emotional pain and said he could not be bothered talking to anyone but his fishing mates. When I asked him if he had a family, he drawled, "I gotta 1950 Thunderbird, fuckin' beautiful that." He exaggerated his hard and tough qualities and his superiority as a worker. Most of his time on the boat is spent shucking scallops, work traditionally regarded as women's work. He is studying for his tickets, and cannot wait for the time when, as he said, he is the Captain and "she's the crew." When telling me about how tedious shucking "all them little white buttons" was, he said, "no matter what you do to 'em, you can't make 'em bleed. No, you can't make 'em bleed." I found myself wondering, does this mean that a "real" man's work is that which requires him to kill?

Karen and Gail, who both married skippers they worked with, were loyal to their husbands and their industry, but Karen said that, as far as all the men were concerned, being a woman on the boat was synonymous with providing domestic and sexual service to them. Gail said the crew always treated her "as a woman—a second-class citizen." However, all the women interviewed made a point of saying that "not all the fishermen are like that," and that there are men willing to share their skills and knowledge with women. The lifestyle

they love is different from that of the more "macho" crew, but the trawler is a worksite of hegemonic masculinity. To many fishers loving the lifestyle, playing the game, being part of the team means accepting misogynist, homophobic, racist attitudes and displaying a blatant disregard for the natural environment, rules and regulations. Those unwilling or unable to adapt are marginalized, subordinated or ridiculed. Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987), in developing the concept of hegemonic masculinity, explain how "particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance" over other groups of men as well as women (1987:179). They point out that, while the "culturally exalted form of masculinity" may only correspond to the actual characters of a small number of men, very large numbers of men are responsible for sustaining the hegemonic model. This may be due to "gratification through fantasy" or "compensation through displaced aggression." However, hegemonic masculinity "embodies a successful strategy in relation to women," and the primary reason for men's complicity is that most men benefit from the subordination of women (ibid.:180).

Health and Safety

The crews on trawlers usually work from about 3:00 p.m. through to 9:00 or 10:00 a.m., taking only short breaks for rest when they can. During this time the nets are "shot" away and the catch brought up and dumped on a sorting table. The crew works at a frenzied pace, standing up sorting, processing, grading and packing the product away in the freezer hold before the next "shot" is brought up. This is done three or four times between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. every day of the week for weeks or even months at a time. The occupational health and safety hazards of this work are high. During the interviews people referred to having tools dropped on them from the rigging, brine tank lids crushing people's heads and being rescued after being poisoned by freezer gas or engine fumes. Reference was also made to being stung, bitten and spiked by "nasties" brought up in the net. I observed one young woman who had the soles of her feet peeling off from severe "athletes foot," caused by working barefooted in the humid and wet conditions. Fishers also spoke about infections from prawns pricking them and rashes developing into "sea boils" from the shells of the scallops. But they all tend to say, "he shouldn't have been there," "I should have got out of the way" or "you get used to it." No one seemed to consider that health and safety might be the responsibility of the boat owners. Sleep deprivation is also a hazard, but fishers were more intent on impressing me with their stamina as "tough guys" than questioning the necessity to work all night and half the day, day after day.

In a 1992 report the Chief Inspector of WorkSafe (then DOHSWA) noted overcrowding and inadequate quarters and sleep deprivation among scallop

fishers, and stated that he found the conditions "in this day . . . incomprehensible." These conditions, he stated, were defended by members of the industry on the grounds of economic necessity. He suggested that standing for long hours shucking scallops, which requires quick repetitive movements while standing on an uneven and cluttered floor space, must lead to accidents from knife cuts and occupational overuse syndrome. Occupational overuse syndrome, or repetitive strain injury, was mentioned by two deckhands and one skipper I interviewed, but I met few deckhands who complained of it, presumably because no one would listen and they simply got off the boat. Sandy said, "I had RSI once—but I worked out what I was doin' wrong and changed the way I was doin' it." According to WorkSafe investigations the common attitude among fishers is that fishing has always been hazardous and "that's the way it is."

The first detailed study of work-related, traumatic fatalities in Australian fisheries was published in 1994 (Driscoll et al.). It was based on data relating to 47 cases over the whole of Australia for a period of three years: 1982 to 1984. The incidence of fatality was 18 times higher than the incidence of fatality for the entire work force and higher than that of mining and agriculture. During the 12 months prior to June 30, 1990, 72 accidents were reported to the Western Australian Department of Marine and Harbours, but most accidents go unreported. In the four years from 1991 to 1995, 14 deaths occurred on the North West trawlers operating around the Shark Bay fishery. Two were individual accidents involving faulty equipment, and the other 12 were on boats that sank. Two of these 12 deaths were young women, itinerant workers working as cooks for the first time. The causes of these fatalities have been attributed to unsafe and crowded work spaces, a lack of routine maintenance of boats and equipment, the use of alcohol and drugs, inexperienced crews working in unsafe weather conditions and fatigue associated with the poor work conditions. It is also an indication of the failure on the part of owners and skippers to pay sufficient attention to their legal responsibility—their General Duty of Care under the *Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act*, 1984-1987. Owners have been accused of being more concerned about cutting the cost of running the boat and accumulating profit than they are about the condition of the boat and the safety of the crew.[4] The 1992 incident that cost five lives involved an overcrowded, overloaded scallop trawler that capsized. The crew of this vessel had also been implicated in drug charges. The 1995 incident, described by the local press as Australia's worst maritime tragedy in 20 years, was the result of five vessels being caught in a cyclone five nautical miles off the North West coast. Two of them sank with the loss of seven lives. Following investigations involving the Police Department and the Department of Transport, WorkSafe recommended charging the owners of the two vessels that sank with failing to provide a safe workplace, and the owner of another

vessel that got into difficulties with failing to ensure the crew's safety by not monitoring the weather. One of these owners also owned the trawler that capsized in 1992. A Coroner's inquest was held in June 1996, and the Coroner delivered a finding of death by misadventure and accident. The case was complicated and the finding controversial because the Coroner had not called for the WorkSafe reports on the incident. His finding was that the skippers "made monumental errors of judgment" and were responsible for failing to find safe anchorage for their vessels. He did not apportion any blame to the owners of the boats (Buck 1996).

In this case the question as to whether the owners failed to provide a safe workplace or whether the skippers took unnecessary risks may never be resolved. However, resistance to undertaking training or using safety equipment, together with risk-taking by fishers, does play a part in the continuation of unsafe work practices. Although acknowledging that owners have a responsibility for the safety of boats and crews and pointing out that fisheries legislation aimed at reducing "fishing effort" by restricting vessel size and horsepower contribute to unsafe conditions of work, the WorkSafe Investigation (1995:60) also states:

> The trawling sector does not appear to be aware that safety involves a partnership between safe work environment and safe workplace behaviours. This would include the fact that most safety activity focuses mainly on reducing physical risks in the environment and a lot less effort focuses on increasing safety behaviour, mainly because people see it as too difficult to change. The industry has many people who still relate to the old adage that "they have been doing some things the same way for years, therefore it must be right." Behaviour and attitudes must be seen as a major challenge if the loss of lives is to be prevented in this industry.

Crews are notoriously stubborn in adhering to old practices and adopting a "she'll be right, mate" attitude. Some deckhands made an analogy to working on land-based factory sites when talking to me, claiming that "it is no worse than working in any other factory." But this contradicted the view that the work was a "pretty high-risk sorta thing" and too hard for most people. Whether denying risk or exaggerating it, such men are confirming their hypermasculinity and maintaining their perceived right to work free from government interference. If they were working on land they would have to wear protective clothing, safety boots, ear muffs and safety harnesses in riggings. Attempts by work-safety authorities to introduce improved life jackets, harnesses and safety training are fiercely resisted.[5] Most of the cooks and itinerant deckhands I interviewed were not aware of the storage place for life jackets or safety beacons and told me they had not been shown how to use them. One woman said she thought the life raft was rusted onto the top deck; another described a "scary" trip down the coast in 1995. She said it was terribly rough,

the door fell off the wheelhouse, the cook fell over and under a table and that, when she took the initiative of preparing a bag in the event of having to leave the boat, no one knew where any of the safety gear was. She could not pry the safety beacon off the wall because of the rust. This young woman and her friend, also a cook/deckhand, stated that they thought it was always the women who worried about health and safety on the boats. One of them had undertaken a maritime college training course, but agreed with her friend that such safety training seemed ludicrous when she actually got on the boat and the men told her that such things as safety lines were unnecessary.

Laughing off health and safety hazards was a common response to my inquiries, and the same thing happened when I asked about alcohol or drug abuse. The WorkSafe inquiries, like my own, found only anecdotal evidence of these practices, and there has been no other quantitative research undertaken in Australia. The attitude of fishers leads me to believe that alcohol and drug use is seen as part of the lifestyle. According to Bluey, it is an essential part. It can also enhance the heroic, risk-taking status of the men. Many people associated with the industry stated that they believed the prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse had diminished since 1992 because "attempts have been made to clean up the industry." The majority of informants, however, discussed the current availability of alcohol and drugs such as "grass," "speed" and "acid" on boats and admitted an interest in using some of them. No one admitted to using heroin, and several said they could not understand why anyone would use it because it "made you too laid back." Amphetamines or "speed," they suggested, would make more sense because the work is so tiring.

Attempts have been made by some companies and skippers to prevent alcohol and drug abuse by running a "dry boat," alcohol and drug free. Others turn a blind eye or find such rules difficult to enforce. When I asked crew members whether they were on "dry" boats, they tended to laugh at me and say, "nobody gets wet on our boat." I collected several stories about fishers who had died from a drug overdose or required treatment for drug abuse. One informant recalled a deckhand who died in her arms, another spoke about a 15-year-old girl being found dead in the toilet with a needle in her arm. But a lot of people asked me to turn off the tape-recorder while they spoke about such painful experiences. They either did not want to give the industry a bad name, because it would make it even harder to find suitable crew, or they feared retribution from unscrupulous, unnamed people. My research assistant and I were refused interviews with several people because they feared we were undercover police with the Drug Squad.

This suspicion of government regulations, fear of policing and bureaucracy was expressed by owners, processors and fishers alike. During the course of my research I was accused of being "with the union," collecting information to write "bullshit reports" or a "spy" with the taxation department" or "that

DOSHWA mob." Some of the more powerful members of the industry have made attempts to implement changes to the industry, but companies and professional fishers' associations maintain a right to "self-regulation" in the industry, and resist government intervention in employment, training, health and safety issues.[6] This self-regulation is similar to, but clashes with, the fisher's belief that he has a right to control his own work space, which should be free of restrictions and regulations.

The work on trawlers can be hard and dangerous with long hours worked in cramped, uncomfortable accommodation on an often unpredictable sea, and the individualistic and self-sufficient fisher, while willing to share heroic tales of the hazards, has little regard for health and safety issues. As a "brave" and "free" man he believes that he alone has the responsibility for his own health and welfare, even if this involves risk-taking. Posters in some of the men's sleeping quarters read: *Apocalypse*, *Immortality* and *Escape*, and a self-destructive, "live fast and die young" mentality is apparent. Adapting to or coping with difficult work conditions and hazards is a challenge, and success confirms these men's confidence, dominance and self-sufficiency (Donaldson 1991:10-11). To complain about conditions or accept the imposition of regulations would challenge this self-perception and blur the distinction between warrior/hero and wimp.

A Career for Women?

There appears to be some truth in the men's claim that "women can't stick it," and to my knowledge there is no woman currently skippering in the Western Australian trawler fishing. One woman who is said to have been the first to obtain the qualifications to skipper a trawler during the 1970s has now retired with her husband, a skipper with whom she worked. Two other women, referred to in the introduction, worked their way up from the position of cook to Master Class IV and Master Class V by carefully choosing male mentors and now teach in a maritime college. However, both gave up fishing when faced with the responsibilities of single parenting.

There are four main reasons why women leave the industry: the demands of marriage and children; their choice of a different lifestyle; the continual resistance from men; and the pressure of a highly competitive industry. Some successful female skippers have also left the industry. They include some who, according to my information, worked in Shark Bay during the 1980s or 1990s and were "tough" or had learned to "handle the men" or "really showed the men up." At least three (not interviewed for this project) left after suffering the effects of drug abuse, which some observers attributed to "cracking under the pressure." A most successful female skipper, widely acknowledged as "beating the boys at their own game," sought assistance for drug addiction and also lost her license after being caught fishing in a restricted zone.[7] This is

a practice sometimes undertaken in order to maintain a consistently high record as the "most efficient skipper," something she had achieved several years in a row. These women seem to have paid a price for striving to beat the men at their own games. The two younger women mentioned above, Carol and Christine, left the boats during their first season because they felt that adapting to the men's lifestyle could lead to them losing their own values or sense of self.[8]

Conclusion

The fishing industry is dominated by rugged individualists, some of whom are itinerant workers, and by entrepreneurs, but these two categories of men have more in common than first meets the eye.[9] They can be both competitive and aggressive, believe in the freedom of the individual that their work is their life and separate themselves geographically and emotionally from women or their families. They can both have a "rapacious" attitude to the natural environment and attitudes and actions that identify them as racist, homophobic and misogynist.

I am not arguing that there is any inherent difference between men and women, or that, if more women worked on the boats or in the management of the industry, it would "humanize" the conditions or result in a more benevolent attitude towards people from different cultures or the natural environment. I am arguing that the fishing industry is dominated by an exaggeratedly masculine culture that has the power to control and exclude others and sustain an unequal sexual division of labour. This makes the work unnecessarily competitive and hazardous, and men actively create the "lifestyle" or adapt to it in order to prove toughness and superiority. This is either tolerated or embraced on the grounds that it promotes competition and increases the income of each individual crew member, as well as the profits of owners of trawlers and fishing companies, the majority of whom are men. The ruggedly individualistic masculinity is consonant with the entrepreneurial and managerial culture. That is why owners name their boats *Top Gun*, *Deadly Weapon*, *Supersonic* and *Predator*.

Women will continue to challenge and resist hegemonic masculine ideals and negotiate their way through the resistance of men. But all that is really needed for them to participate in the industry is that they receive appropriate maritime training, have a love of the sea, an enjoyment of fishing and manual labour and the ability to cope with long periods of being away from friends and family on the land. For a permanent and economically equal place in the industry they also have to ally themselves to the overall goals of an increasingly competitive, capital-intensive industry, one which has been referred to as having a history of "rape and pillage. Bugger up one species then move onto the next" (Cribb 1995:4).[10] This is an aim that has international global, social

and economic ramifications. Any change, therefore, must not simply be about getting more places for women in the industry but about challenging and transforming the exclusive, masculine culture that promotes an heroic ideal of risk-taking, a ruthless exploitation of the natural environment, a competitive hierarchy and a negligent attitude towards the rights of others to work in a safe environment.

Notes

1. This was apparent in my conversations with fishers, crew and owner operators, and demonstrated by a "warning" about attempts to unionize the industry appearing in the *National Fishing Industry Council Newsletter* (1993:5).
2. An "ocker" is an archetypal "uncultivated" Australian worker who exhibits and exaggerates uncouth and chauvinistic behaviour (*The Macquarie Dictionary*, 2nd ed. [Sydney, New South Wales: Macquarie University, 1995]).
3. Several fishers claimed they "hated" turtles because they were "stupid" and "stink." Turtles, sharks, rays and other large animals caught in the trawlers' nets were referred to by fishers as "monsters," and they decried the use of turtle extruders (TEDs), which can protect them. The devices have been used in the United States since 1978 and incorporated into conservation regulations. In 1995, the U.S. government ruled to prohibit the importation of prawns from countries who have not adopted such measures. This prohibition was to come into effect after May 1, 1996 (see Marine and Coastal Community Network, Australia 1996).
4. Discussions with Chief Inspector, Fatalities and Special Investigations, WorkSafe Western Australia (previously Department of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare) on January 19, 1995. All these incidents were referred to during interviews with fishers and confirmed by access to reports (see DOHSW, Western Australia 1991, 1992a, 1992b, and WorkSafe Western Australia 1995).
5. There is a need for quantitative research on working conditions in Australian fisheries. While I agree with Marian Binkley (1995) that off-shore fishing is an extremely hazardous occupation I have not made extensive use of her work here because my major concern is the impact of fishermen's attitudes and behaviour on women. There are no women on the boats in Binkley's study on the Nova Scotia fishery, and the cultural, historical and climatic conditions are different from those in Western Australia. I do, however, agree that fishers need to feel in control of their work site and that land-based safety recommendations are not always appropriate for implementation at sea.
6. Nor-West Seafoods Pty. Ltd. has formal employment contracts and provides some health and safety training to crew at the beginning of each season. None of the deaths that have occurred recently have occurred on that company's vessels. The company also supports the new employment and training programs being implemented by Skillshare in Carnarvon. See also *The Northern Guardian* (1992:2). The peak body representing fishers is the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council (Incorporated), which has since 1992 employed an independent consultant to assist with occupational health, safety and training issues. In the Council's Annual Report (Western Australian Fishing Industry Council 1995) the chairman states that among challenges of the future for the industry is the need to "ensure that we shape our future the way we want it and not have it moulded by outside influences." A list of aims of the Council included: "Ensure that the industry remains union-free" and "Minimise Government Regulations."
7. This information was confirmed by her employer, colleagues, friends and a Fisheries Officer during informal and recorded interviews.

8. In 1991 Carpenter and Acosta wrote: "Even if the women become more skillful than the men at the men's games, they might win only to find that winning has cost them their souls." This is quoted in McKay 1994.
9. These two categories have been used by fishers and researchers. Fishers have "an attachment to and expression of a way of life that emphasizes self-reliance, independence, and individual control of the labor process" (Jentoft and Davis 1993:357; also see Thomas et al. 1995:143-150). Entrepreneurial fishers may be competitive, independent owner-operators or companies that own boats and processing plants. The two groups are dependent on each other. While the relationship has potential for conflict, it also promotes competition among the independent fishers.
10. See Cribb 1995:4. No fisher interviewed expressed any concern for the ecology, the depletion of stocks or the future of the industry. One skipper said in response to my question about having such concerns—"No. That's the good thing about capitalism, they will always find something else."

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NOVA SCOTIAN FISHING FAMILIES COPING WITH THE FISHERIES CRISIS[1]

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Abstract: The fisheries crisis has severely affected Nova Scotian fishing families. These fishers and their households had developed strategies to cope with the work organization and schedule of the various fisheries prosecuted in this area. Critical reductions in catches of groundfish have led to lay-offs or work reductions, to changes in work organization and to exploitation of other fisheries, some of which previously had been underutilized. This article focusses on one area of southwestern Nova Scotia to describe how new adaptations have been developed and how these previously beneficial adaptations conflict with the new situation these households now face.

Résumé: La crise des pêcheries a profondément affecté les familles de pêcheurs en Nouvelle-Écosse. Les pêcheurs et leur familles ont su développer les stratégies pour faire face à l'organisation du travail et aux horaires des diverses pêcheries touchées dans cette région. Les sévères réductions des prises de poissons de bas-fonds ont conduit à des mises à pied ou à des reductions d'heures de travail, ainsi qu'à des changements dans l'organisation du travail dans d'autres pêcheries qui n'avaient pas été utilisées à capacité auparavant. Cet article, portant en particulier sur une région de la Nouvelle-Écosse décrit les nouvelles adaptations et comment celles, autrefois bénéfiques, sont à présent en conflit direct avec la nouvelle situation économique que rencontrent ces familles.

Introduction

This article focusses on families of Nova Scotia fishermen[2] who live in or sail from Lunenburg and Halifax Counties. It studies their strategies to cope with the changes brought about by the current fisheries crisis. Although fishers have prosecuted many different types of fisheries off Nova Scotia's shores, these fisheries can be divided on the basis of employment into two groups—industrial and independent. Industrialized fishers work for companies, and independent fishers work as, or for, independent operators/owners. This

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distinction—industrial/independent—roughly coincides with the division between the off-shore and the in-shore fisheries respectively.[3]

In February 1992, the federal government halted off-shore harvesting of northern cod in the northern waters of Newfoundland. In June of the same year the government expanded its moratorium to include in-shore fishers in that area. It subsequently issued a groundfish management plan limiting all fishing of northern cod off Newfoundland as well as in specific areas of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, including Sydney Bight, and in waters off Nova Scotia north of Halifax (see Figure 1). On August 31, 1993 the government closed five more areas, virtually halting all cod fishing off the Atlantic shore north of Halifax except for fisheries off the Labrador coast. Groundfish quotas in those areas remaining open were severely cut. The latest groundfish plan has severely limited catches in the remaining open areas.

Figure 1
Map of Atlantic Canada

Source: Redrawn from Jenson 1980:113.

As of 1993, the northern cod closures have eliminated over 40 000 fishery jobs (Kelly 1993:14-15). Through The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) and in conjunction with early retirement packages for plant workers and retirement of groundfish licenses by fishers, the federal government has compensated plant workers and fishers for lost earnings and offered them retraining programs, but the future for those people, their families and their communities appears bleak. Declines in the fishery of southwestern Nova Scotia have inevitably restructured the economies of the local communities, and the government has not offered any relief to the local retailers or other people indirectly affected by the fishery closures. Men who have been laid off, or have left the fishery altogether, must find other employment or collect government assistance such as the "fisherman's package" (TAGS), unemployment insurance or other social benefits. Many full-time fishers are reluctant to sign on to TAGS, because it requires them to give up their fishing licenses. Most of these men plan to return to the fishery once the "stocks bounce back," and are unwilling to give up these hopes now. But the compensation packages cannot go on forever, and even if the fishery does rebound no one expects it to support the large numbers of vessels and crews that had previously exploited this resource. Moreover, in a region of chronically high unemployment, many fishers and plant workers with relatively poor education are sceptical about what jobs they can retrain for and where those jobs will be located. In fact, in the summer of 1996, the federal government stopped the retraining component of TAGS.

In Nova Scotia, particularly in the area south of Halifax and along the Bay of Fundy shore—including the study area—where the fishery is more diverse, the impact of the moratorium has been recessionary rather than catastrophic. Many companies in this area have downsized their operations. Companies have tied up their vessels, have sold off surplus vessels, have retired aging vessels and have refitted groundfish trawlers to fish for other species such as shrimp, shark or surf clams. The *Cape North* and the *Cape Adare*, factory freezer groundfish trawlers, have been sold. These actions have led to a reduction of the off-shore groundfish fleet (vessels over 100 feet) from 37 vessels in 1986 to 15 vessels in 1993, and of the off-shore scallop fleet (vessels over 90 feet) from 68 vessels in 1986 to 43 vessels in 1993 (personal telephone communication with Leo Brander, Policy and Economic Branch, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, April 16, 1996). With fewer vessels to operate and to maintain, the companies need fewer men and lower plant capacity. Some fish plants have been closed while other plants have shortened their work time and/or extended their vacation period. Some companies laid off the whole crews of redundant vessels, while other companies run two crews that alternate trips on a single vessel. For those employees who still have a full-time job, life continues much as it did before. However, for those men who now work on double-crewed vessels, time on shore has increased from an average of two days to

two weeks, and their wages have been cut in half. Those men who have been laid off must find other employment or collect government assistance.

Changes in the in-shore sector are much more difficult to document. In this sector some fishers who held groundfish licenses have stopped fishing, but are retaining their licenses for when the fishery rebounds. Those groundfish fishers who are still fishing sail farther off shore within their traditional fishing area, or go beyond their traditional fishing grounds farther along the southwestern shore as far as the Bay of Fundy in search of the elusive cod and pollock. Many have let go their hired help and rely on family members to take up the slack.

Those fishers who hold a variety of licenses, although they are costly to maintain, are the best off. Many in-shore fishers have reactivated licenses, which had remained moribund for years, thereby increasing their fishing effort on valuable species, such as tuna and crabs, or exploiting underutilized species such as shark, dogfish, mackerel and surfclams. Many have returned to catching lobster and scallops, two of the most lucrative stocks. Lobster fishing, already a mainstay for many fishers, has taken on increased importance. Since the groundfish moratorium, lobster fishers have increase their fishing effort, but the total seasonal catches have remained the same. But in all cases incomes of in-shore fishers in this study have dropped dramatically. In order to retain their vessels and licenses, and to make ends meet, some fishers have even sold their homes. A few have simply given up and taken the package.

The Study

Data for this article come from a study which compared and contrasted the adaptations of off-shore versus in-shore fishermen's wives with the extraordinary pressures put on their households because of the changing nature of their husbands' work. The study focussed on independence and the perception of independence, social networks, social attitudes and finances. Although particular attention was paid to the transition between living with and living apart from their husbands, the study examined the complete work cycle. One of the major areas of inquiry, and the focus of this article, was the impact of the decline of the fisheries on fishers' households. The populations under investigation were the wives of off-shore fishermen, who sail out of Lunenburg, the largest Nova Scotian deep-sea port, and the wives of in-shore fishermen living in Lunenburg and Halifax Counties. In addition to the fishing industry, the Lunenburg/Bridgewater region offers employment in tourism, light industry and the service sector, while Halifax, the largest metropolitan centre in Atlantic Canada and less than an hour's drive from Lunenburg, offers work opportunities in a wide range of industries.

Phase 1 of the study consisted of a literature review and a series of in-depth interviews with selected key informants including a number of wives of off-

shore and in-shore fishers, wives' support groups, community support workers, fish company managers and elected officials in Lunenburg and other Lunenburg County communities. We used information from those sources to generate statistical profiles, demographic and socio-economic parameters and to identify areas of residential concentration for the populations. Relying on the preliminary information obtained in this phase and from previous research, we developed the interview schedules and sampling plans for the subsequent phases.

Phase 2 consisted of a general survey administered to 150 off-shore fishermen's wives from late August to November 1993 and 150 in-shore fishermen's wives from late August 1993 to May 1994. These data were analyzed in turn (Phase 3). Each survey stood on its own. During July and October 1994 we conducted 25 taped in-depth interviews with wives from each group and analyzed these data (Phase 4). Quotations used in this article are drawn from these interviews. The number after the quotation refers to the interview number. The first 25 interviews (Interviews #1-#25) are with off-shore fishermen's wives while the last 25 interviews (Interviews #26-#50) are with in-shore fishermen's wives. All the names are pseudonyms.

What Happens When a Fishery Declines

The moratorium or cutbacks in the groundfish fishery has made no direct impact on a few exceptional fishermen's households; they have maintained their jobs and their incomes. But most come from fishing families and many have brothers, fathers or cousins who have been affected. Although there is a real fear that their husbands' off-shore fishing job could be affected in the next round of quota cuts, wives try to be optimistic about their future. Here is how Elizabeth, who has been married for 30 years and has three adult sons, feels about her household's present situation as they near retirement:

> I am somewhat [worried]. I don't dwell on it a lot, you know. I feel that for the most part we have to live for the present now, and prepare for the future—we have been saving for many years, . . . but, there is that fear that Eric's job will disappear in, say, a year . . . two years, whatever. Just about every year when the new season starts in January, the company meets, and this boat is old, and we know that it's a limited time. . . . So it's more or less, which year will it be? And when it goes, I don't think there'll be anything there for him. . . . That company only has four boats right now, and it's not likely that there will be a job there. (Interview #5)

For most fishers the effects of the crisis continually reshape their daily existence. We will look at those changes wrought by the fishery crisis from three perspectives: changes predominantly affecting off-shore fishing families, changes predominantly affecting in-shore fishing families and challenges common to both fisheries. Before discussing how fishers' households have

coped with the current crisis, it is necessary to review how these types of fisheries—independent and industrial—affected fishers' household and family life prior to the collapse. It is also important to note that viewing off-shore and in-shore fishers as two groups with separate identities is in some ways to create a false dichotomy. Our survey took a snapshot of one moment in time. If at that moment a woman's husband was fishing off shore, we identified her as an off-shore fisher's wife; if at that moment a woman's husband was fishing in shore, we identified her as an in-shore fisher's wife. But some men move from one fishery to another, while others spend their whole working lives in only one fishery.

Impacts of the Fisheries Crisis on Off-shore Fishing Families

In the industrial fishery before the crisis men worked as deckhands or officers on large, vertically integrated, company-owned scallop or groundfish vessels over 65 feet in length. They normally spent 10 to 14 days at sea and 48 hours at home. Men moved between the scallop and groundfish fishing fleets, depending on the level of fish stocks and the need for workers. Of these men, about a quarter had jobs in the wheelhouse as officers, eventually becoming mates or captains. Since deck work is physically demanding, few men stay on the deck after 45 years of age. Often when these men "retire" from the off-shore fishery, they move into the in-shore fishery. (A few men, called engineers, worked in the engine rooms of very large [over 100 feet] fishing vessels. These men generally worked on ferries, off-shore oil rigs, Coast Guard or the merchant vessels as well.)

The fishermen's work schedule dominated the organization of his wife's work. While her husband was away, a wife had the sole responsibility for the household for 10 to 14 days and then shared this responsibility with her partner for only two or three days before he sailed again. Up until recently this schedule continued throughout his working life, with short respites when he took off from specific trips for vessel refit, vacation, deer hunting, training course, illness or accident and Christmas. For most couples, the time on shore was the most important time in their family life. Women yearned for the two or three days when their husbands were home. Men talked about living ten days in two.

When her husband was away, the household generally functioned smoothly. Each day followed a routine—getting the kids ready for school, going to work, cleaning the house, making the meals and paying the bills. She spent time with the family, got caught up on her work and got a good night's sleep. As issues arose the wife dealt with them—she disciplined the children, she got the car fixed. She was independent and autonomous but at a price. Lonely, constantly worrying about his safety and with all the responsibilities of the home and family falling upon her, she went about her daily routine

waiting for his return. When he came home chaos broke out, the daily schedule broke down and they "crammed ten days into two." She had more work to do around the house, but it was an exciting time. They went out. They saw movies. They had friends over. Then he went back to sea. Life returned to normal and the routine began again.

These schedules meant that to varying degrees wives of industrial fishermen spent their married lives alternating between being a single parent/person with primary responsibility for the household and being part of a couple jointly responsible for the household. In these households, the husband's work sphere did not overlap with the wife's domestic sphere. Each maintained separate control over his or her respective domain—he made the money to run the household and she in turn made a home for him and their children. This situation set up a co-dependency between the partners, where each supplied an essential component for maintaining the household. With the crisis in the fishery, this co-dependency has broken down.

The strategy of off-shore companies to meet the fisheries crisis has been downsizing—lay-offs or reduced work for continuing employees. Those capacities that enabled a wife to be a supportive spouse to a fully employed off-shore fisher may conflict with her fulfilling the role of wife to an unemployed, laid-off or part-time fisher. At the same time the husband must develop ways of coping with living ashore with no job or decreased employment and a reduced income. In past studies (e.g., Horbulewicz 1972; Poggie 1980), off-shore fishers have described the three worst features of their job as health and safety hazards, high stress and extended separation from home. In my study of off-shore fishers (Binkley 1995a, 1995b), we found that the most common reason for leaving the off-shore fishery—after injury and economic concerns—was the long time away from home. Many couples look forward to the prospect of having the husband home for longer periods of time. It gives them a chance to get to know each other better. When asked how her relationship with her second husband had changed, Cathy, a woman in her mid-40s with two adult children, replied:

> We may be a little closer than what we were when he was [gone] . . . when somebody is gone twelve days and home four, and twelve days and home four, that type of thing, it doesn't give you a chance . . . to get close and talk over things that have gone on in twelve days . . . like he's gone another twelve days and you're thinking, "Oh, I forgot to tell him, you know something happened, you know, twenty days before that." Of course then by the time he comes in, it's gone all together. (Interview #3)

The longer time at home gives the husband an opportunity to rest from the pressures of being at sea and to be re-introduced into family life. It relieves the wife of the sole responsibility of running the household and making family decisions, and opens the opportunity for the couple to develop a common life.

But this new-found "closeness" is not without a psychological price for both spouses. Many women talk about their loss of independence, of having another child to look after or of their husband being underfoot. For some women having their husband home all the time can be frustrating. They are used to being on their own. What once was an accommodation for a few days has now become a way of life. As Holly, who has been married for over 20 years and now works part-time in the local hospital, remarked:

> I'm not used to the last six months, I mean even when I crawl out of bed in the morning, and . . . if he's around . . . sometimes I go in and I look, and he's even making the bed. It's like every step I make, he's at my feet type of thing. But when I'm working nights, and he's here by himself, you know, and he's making the meals, and doing the laundry, and whatever . . . then when I get up in the afternoon and sit for a few minutes, and then I usually have my bath once I get up, and I look and he's going and running the water for my bath (laughter). . . . Sometimes you think, well I like to do these things myself . . . but you know, he's even doing that (laughter). (Interview #8)

But Holly's uxorious husband is an exception. In most cases the fisher's adaptation to life at sea conflicts with their perceived role of husband and father, and their integration into a land-based way of life proves difficult. As Janet, a mother of five who recently stopped working in order to look after her ailing mother, remarked:

> I think it's hard for him to adapt to it because, he's so used to filling everything into four days that when he's home that month . . . he's just getting used to a normal time for sleeping and a normal time for doing things, when he's got to turn around and he's got to change everything again and go out. (Interview #10)

When the fisherman comes ashore he must adjust to his family and leave the male world of the ship behind. He enters a matri-focal household where he may feel the outsider. He has to cope with an unfamiliar shore routine. Often he finds he has little in common with non-fishers and has no role in the community other than husband and father. But being home for a longer period of time opens up opportunities to get involved with the family and the community which were not possible before. Some men, particularly those on the double-crewed vessels, have taken advantage of this time to join a sports team or to become involved in community, school and church activities. They have taken courses to enhance their fisheries credentials or to upgrade their education. Others, most notably those who have been laid off, do not take advantage of these new-found opportunities. Rather they feel that they have let their families down by not fulfilling their side of the household equation—supporting the family. These feelings of inadequacy erode their self-esteem and self-worth, which may lead to depression or other psychological problems.

Impacts of the Decline in the In-shore Fishery

Unlike the off-shore fishery where wives' and husbands' work spheres were traditionally separate, the in-shore fishery wives' and husbands' work spheres may overlap, to varying degrees. In in-shore fishers' households the degree to which the wife contributes to her husband's fishing enterprise determines the organization of her work. Until recently, during the fishing season the husband sailed for short periods of time—through the day, overnight or for a few days—and he returned only to sleep and eat. Although he might be physically at home, his work schedule limited his ability to take part in everyday life. When the fishing seasons ceased he might have spent between two to six months ashore. Thus the extent to which the rhythm of the in-shore household revolved around fishing depended on the level of integration of the husband's and wife's work.

In some cases, these households make no concession to the fishing while in others the household routine and the wife's work are dominated by the needs of the fishery. If the fisherman worked on another person's boat as a helper, his wife may have done nothing beyond washing his fishing clothes or preparing his meals to take aboard. If the fisherman owned and operated his own boat, his wife may have been involved in the shore-based side of his business. For example, she might have kept the books, bought supplies for the boat, checked fish prices or even sold the fish. She took on those chores in addition to her own work inside or outside the home. In a few exceptional cases the wife may have fished with her husband or another man. During the off season, the fisher remained at home for long periods of time or he may have signed on to one of the off-shore vessels. In these households the husband's work sphere and the wife's domestic sphere overlapped. Each maintained control over their respective domains, but each "helped" the other out. This situation set up an interdependency between the couple, leading to a more balanced economic exchange within the relationship.

With the crisis in the fishery, the balance between the spouses' work spheres has changed. Fishers have used three strategies to meet the crisis: (1) staying out longer and exploiting resources farther off shore or in richer fishing grounds; (2) exploiting as many species as possible; and (3) employing as much household or family labour as possible. Fishers employ these strategies individually or in tandem. Each stratagem exerts different forms of stress on household and family adaptations to the in-shore fishery.

In a few cases fishers have not employed any of these strategies; rather they have continued to exploit their traditional fishing grounds but increased their fishing effort. One example is Stewart, a gill netter who still fishes out of a port close to home rather than going farther away to Georges Bank, a richer fishing area. Although his catches are modest, they are consistent and he can still make a living and have a home life. His wife Susan, a mother of four who works full-time, explains their trade-offs for this modest result:

> There's only a couple guys that stayed around these shores to fish. A lot of them have moved on up to Georges [Bank] to do their gill netting up there. Stewart didn't make that move. He felt that . . . [although] he's not catching the fish like them fellows are, . . . he's consistent with his catch. I mean, them guys go up there and they could fish for a month and . . . the total at the end of the month could be thirty-five thousand. I mean Stewart won't catch thirty-five thousand, but he might get twenty, eighteen or twenty thousand. But they've had to work a lot harder, their gear gets ruined, the tides and stuff. . . . But he's making a living, that's what counts. He said it's got to be really bad for him to make that move all the way up there. Because you're never home, and when you do come home it's long enough to do your laundry, stay overnight in your own bedroom one or two nights, and then you're gone again for another month. (Interview #44)

Most of the women we interviewed reported that their husbands were now fishing farther and farther away from home, and staying out longer and longer at sea. In order to make economies, many boats do not return home for days or weeks at a time. Of course, fishing farther off shore and in unfamiliar waters aggravated another worry—safety at sea. Here is how Dorothy, a woman in her mid-30s with two pre-teenage girls, characterized the trade-offs made between economics and personal well-being:

> He's trying to go for longer periods of time. Instead of going like for one or two days, which he normally would go, he's trying to go for a week because it cuts back on the expenses. . . . And I find that if you talk to other fishermen, they'll probably tell you the same thing. You'll find a lot of the smaller boats going farther and farther off shore where it's more dangerous, because their boats aren't equipped for it. It's unsafe because if a gale wind came up, they can't get in fast enough, they gotta have the engines in their boats. . . . It's just to the point where either they're going to be out of a job, or safety's going to be compromised because it's just at the limit. . . . So instead of going, from side to side, you're going straight out in the ocean. You're going to the continental shelf in a 38-foot boat. And that's what they're doing up to the Bay of Fundy. They're getting fish up there now, so you're seeing boats from here, from Tancook Island and places, are going up there, going 25 miles off, almost to the American line in small boats—till something happens. You're going to see the wind breeze up and these boats aren't going to be able to get in. They're not going to be used to the tides, because we don't have the tides down here to do it. And somebody's going to lose their life before they realize what's going on. That's what's going to happen. (Interview #29)

As Dorothy and Susan noted, fishing in strange waters can set up a number of hazards for fishers—strange tides, different types of sea bottoms and unknown navigational obstacles. All of these hazards increase fishers' stress and anxiety and may also contribute to additional expenses, such as costs to replace gear, time spent on repairs and additional fuel costs. The two basic questions then for these men and their households are: "Are the monetary

benefits sufficient?" and "Is the erosion of the non-monetary benefits (e.g., long time away from home or less safe working conditions) worth it?"

This is the first time that some in-shore fishermen's wives have had to cope with running the household completely on their own. They must develop the independence that is necessary for the task. For some like Gilda, who works full-time and has two teenage sons, this is an opportunity to be seized, for others it is something to fear. As Gilda comments: "See I'm independent.... Some people, oh they don't want him to go or what-not. I'm not that personality [type]. I'm not scared to stay alone.... It doesn't bother me" (Interview #32). Being on their own with no other adult to help with household chores means taking on additional work and responsibility. Dorothy's comments illustrate these concerns:

> I'm even more conscious of the time that he's gone. Everything has to be done and it has to be done just perfect. I find that I have to get the lawn mowed, I have to keep the kids well looked after and see to their things, I have to get the house spotless until he gets home. You know what I mean, on a daily basis I don't want him to come in a day early and have anything in a mess or whatever. Or if he wanted me to pick up things for him I have to.... I have to just organize my life.... Sometimes I find it hard, and I think the kids find it hard, to adjust to the change more than I do. (Interview #29)

Many of the comments made by in-shore fishers' wives are reminiscent of comments and adaptations made by off-shore fishers' wives when their husbands were at sea for extended periods of times.

With the decline of the groundfish, many in-shore fishers rely on other fisheries to supply their income. For most of our sample, lobstering had become their main source of income. But lobster stocks, like other marine resources, are cyclical. Now, there is nothing to fall back on. Brenda, a woman in her early 30s who works at sea with her husband, voiced these fears:

> Bruce just mainly depends on lobstering, but he has other fishing licenses. He hand lines, sword fishes and things like that. If anything goes wrong with the lobster season, with the catch of the lobsters, sometimes that runs in cycles, we've got nothing else to fall back on. There isn't any other fish out there to catch. And he's got a $75 000 boat sitting down there, and a $20 000 license, piece of paper or whatever. And if the lobsters go, if he wanted to get out of the fisheries, the way the fishing is we could never get the money that he put into it. (Interview #27)

The real economic problem is the reliance on one species as the mainstay of their household economy and of the fishery as a whole. The fisher who holds a number of licenses is able to spread the risk—if one fishery is down then another could be exploited; however, all fisheries are cyclical and few fisheries in the North Atlantic are rebounding back as quickly to baseline stock levels as in the past. Fishers recognize the cyclical nature and the need of fish stocks to rebound in the future. As Brenda remarks:

> Our income—we depend and live off just lobstering. So that's been okay. If you come [to] interview [me] maybe in another three or four years, I might be pretty sad looking. I'll have a nine to five job somewhere, and I'll be the working spouse [laughter]. . . . Lobstering took a cycle one time before. Bruce just got into it when the boom came back up. But I think we can look for a cycle, another few years that we won't be able to live on lobstering. I'm thinking about food and bills, not just all the frills, right. But I don't know, really, like the other fish aren't going to come back. (Interview #27)

Another concern is the market. Many fishers fear that the price of lobsters will fall. Since they are putting more and more effort into catching each lobster, they want to be rewarded for this effort. That is to say, they want to make the same profit or do better than they did before, once the expenses are subtracted from their sales. Comments by Rosemary, a wife of an in-shore fisherman for over 35 years, illustrate this point:

> I would say with the lobstering, the price is a major part, and if you don't get the price, you don't make anything. And it seems like every year it's getting more difficult because it's the waiting till they sell, and do this and do that, and the uncertainty is just so great. It's always on your mind, what's going to happen. (Interview #43)

One of the strategies employed by fishers to cut costs is to take their wives, sons or other family members on as "helpers." This strategy is most frequently used in lobstering and in the salt-fish trade where fishers still return home most evenings and has been a common way to cut expenses in the past as well as now. As Dorothy explains: "So the difference is the odds really. Like he can pay somebody else, say nine/ten dollars an hour, just to wash fish boxes and salt fish, whereas if I do it, the money stays with us, type of thing. So, the difference is the odds there" (Interview #29). But even in these situations some fishers still cannot make a living.

Many of the women we talked to spoke of how the amount of work they did in the fishery has dramatically increased, particularly those chores associated with the lobster fishery. However, in some cases women spoke of being excluded from the fishery. Longer fishing trips associated with the groundfishery are not conducive to wives working as helpers since they have competing family and household commitments (e.g., looking after children, day-to-day running of the home). Some women who used to go out with their husbands had to stay at home. Even those women whose work for their husband's fishing enterprise was restricted to shore-based activities (e.g., baiting trawl, selling catches) have ceased their contributions because of the distances involved. In order to sustain economies, most of these tasks were then taken on by the husband himself rather than by a "hired hand."

Like those who fish off shore, in-shore fishers see their self-esteem and self-worth defined by their ability to fish. Giving up the fishery is a difficult thing to do, but, unlike the off-shore fisher who is laid off or has his work reduced by the company, the in-shore fisher must make the decision himself or be closed down by the government through fishery regulations. Some women say their husbands will fish, no matter what, until the government closes them down and then will wait until the fishery re-opens to start fishing again. Other women say their husbands are seriously considering leaving the fishery if the government closes it down. Still other women report that their husbands are entertaining the possibility of leaving the fishery because of the mental and economic stress. But none of the woman we interviewed said that their in-shore fishing husbands would voluntarily leave the fishery. The following comments are representative of the feelings of the women we interviewed. We will be begin with Dorothy's comments:

> He doesn't want to ever give up fishing. Like I said, it's in his blood . . . like that's what they say. . . . He enjoys it. He loves the ocean. But, it's getting to the point now, it's just so much stress. You know, the regulations are changing daily. There's no fish. You're going all over the place for them, and making more expenses just to try to find the fish. It's hard to get anybody to work for you because with the fishing so slack and your expenses so high, you have to still be able to operate and yet pay a man for what he's worth. And a lot of the younger people, like I'd say from 30 down, they just want to go long enough to get unemployment stamps, that's all they worry about. They don't have enough expenses and things in behind them to make them want to go and work. . . . But honestly, no I don't think he'd ever want to give up fishing. He could do other work but he wouldn't be happy at it. (Interview #29)

For many fishers the economic considerations are secondary to their desire to fish and to be at sea. Taking on the package (TAGS) is a possibility that some couples think about, but only in the abstract—because they and their extended family have too much invested in the enterprise. Consider the comments of Claire, a new mother in her mid-20s:

> The worst scenario is the fishery being closed completely. But then, if we have to, he'll have to go on the package . . . the aid package or whatever that they have. But if he does go on that, like to get re-training for something, you're not allowed to go back to the fishery. And, . . . his father owns his own boat and license and everything, and his father will never give it up. Never. Like, they can survive without him even fishing if they have to. But he fishes because it gives him something to do. And he wants Colin to take that over someday, so Colin can't leave the fishery if he ever intends on taking his dad's boat. (Interview #28)

For Quinsee, who owns her own business and has two adult children, and her husband Quintin, leaving the fishery is not an issue. She claims that, even

if the government closed down the fishery for four or five years, her husband would patiently wait for it to open again. He would not give up his licenses or his desire to fish. Here are some of Quinsee's comments on this topic.

> It's entirely up to the Fisheries Department what they decide. So long as he can go fishing that's fine, because Quintin's one that has to have something to do. And, of course, if they said there's no more fishing this year, there's not going to be any more fishing for five years, well he'd do his nets all up and be ready to go when they say you can go now, you know. And then he would work on his traps and get ready for lobster season and maybe have a little more time to set nets for bait, for lobstering and that kind of thing. And, other than that . . . maybe in the summer we might be able to have a little break and go on vacation somewhere or something. (Interview #42)

Common Considerations—Financial

Being home for longer periods of time has an economic cost. Fishers whose boats are tied up, have been laid off or who work on a vessel with a rotating crew suffer a decline in their wages. Finances, which were always uncertain, impose an additional constraint. It generally falls on the women to reorganize the budget to make do. Most fishing households, which are used to having a "good income," are now just trying to make ends meet. As Gilda explains:

> You're used to making big money, right. You can contribute to an RRSP [Registered Retirement Savings Plan] every year; you pay your . . . insurances; . . . you go to the grocery store, you buy whatever you want to buy. School time comes and you take the kids and you buy brand names. . . . Now it's get yourself a job, because I can't afford your brand names. You go to the grocery store, you buy all the sales, and you don't contribute to the RRSPs any more because you don't have any money to contribute and you're worrying—do I have enough money to make my boat payment in September? . . . You come down quite a bit and you change your lifestyle a lot. Not that you were a high-roller or anything, but you just don't have a thousand, a couple thousand dollars sitting in your bank account any more. (Interview #32)

Families use savings put away for a home, children's education or retirement to pay the daily bills. But dipping into savings is the last resort for many—as Ina puts it—"we have some savings in the bank, but you can't keep dishing into them, or they'll be gone" (Interview #9). Sources of credit are limited. Banks, which only a few years ago were giving fishers' loans with little trouble, will now not even consider fishers for loans. Where once it was a minor inconvenience, the breakdown of a household appliance or a part on the fishing boat now takes on catastrophic implications. As Dorothy explained:

> You don't know where you're future's going to be. Like before, a couple, say even two years ago, you knew that you had money in the bank. You were paying your bills on a regular basis, you weren't behind in anything. Fishing was good.

> You could plan for your children's futures with putting money away for their futures and things, whereas now you, there's just nothing left. By the time you pay your bills and you pay on ones that you haven't got paid, and you keep your payments going, there's nothing left for the future. . . . In fact, the last couple years, fishing's been so bad that we've been using the money we had saved, just to keep our heads above water, which is going to get you into trouble. Because, if you had a major breakdown, for instance, that could cost—that could make it over right there. Because everybody has their limits to how much . . . money you can go in debt. (Interview #29)

Younger couples who are just buying a home and/or boat and starting a family find the financial crunch harrowing. For them, there have been no good years to fall back on. Eunice, who is in her late 30s with a nine-year-old daughter, compares her and her husband's situation as a "middle-aged" couple with those just starting out:

> I see a lot of fishermen are worse off than us because they just got a new boat lately, they've got bigger payments, or they've just got married recently and they have a house mortgage and I see them struggling. Because we've been at it longer, we had money saved so we're sort of more secure, you know, our house was paid for, no big bills, other than the boat. And where we only have two years left, that payment's not as big as somebody who has a new boat. And there's quite a few of them around here that I know are more depressed and more seriously thinking about what's going to happen than I am right now. . . . I know a couple women that are scared, really scared. (Interview #47)

How much money can you go into debt? How much are you willing to sacrifice to continue fishing? These are strategic questions for many fishers. For the fisher with no mortgage and no car payments, the day-to-day bills are relatively low. But if you are paying for a house and one or two cars your expenses are substantial. Add boat payments, as in the case of an in-shore fisher, and the payments can be staggering. Older couples, who have paid off the mortgages on their home and boat, are better off, but it is still a struggle to meet the daily bills.

No matter where fishing households are in their family cycle, budgeting and setting spending priorities dominate. As Linda, a young mother with two small children, points out "Your priorities have changed one hundred percent" (Interview #12). In order to make ends meet, women buy second-hand clothes, take no vacations, stop eating out or going to movies or plays. They can no longer afford to fix up their house or buy a new car, clothing, furniture or appliances.

For the husband, a decline in his wages indicates his inability to provide for his family and erodes his self-esteem. Nova Scotian fishermen are proud and independent men. They consciously traded off being at home for financial well-being. They wanted respect from the community and their family, and sought it through financial means—expensive consumer goods such as new

cars, modern houses, all-terrain vehicles and other leisure goods. As in other industrial settings, conspicuous consumption indicates success and validates their choice of working in the fishery rather than in other employment. Those items "proved" that they were good providers, husbands and fathers. But now most laid-off or unemployed fishermen no longer have a "good" income; they collect UI (Unemployment Insurance) or the "fisherman's package." Once their UI has been exhausted they will have to rely on welfare or other types of social assistance packages and/or their wives' earnings. They are desperate to get onto another boat or to get another job, if only to have enough stamps to continue to collect UI and to not go on welfare. Ina, a woman in her mid-40s with two children, describes her husband's search for a job:

> There is no work. He's tried, he's went in. . . . Like, it's the same . . . if you go to another firm. Like, what he was worried about and which he's still worried about, is setting up enough stamps for another year. . . . And he tried to get on boats, . . . like he went for two weeks straight, every day into Lunenburg, but with being on unemployment you can't use no more gas up than what you really can, you know. So, he was doing that for two weeks and then he just stopped 'cause there was just no chances [jobs] to get. None whatsoever. (Interview #9)

With no work, they feel lost. Their sense of worthlessness resembles that of workers who have left the fishery because of injury (Binkley 1995b). Ina continues describing her husband's situation:

> Some days, you know, [he's] a bit contrary. And you could tell what it was over. Especially, like, the days that he went to Lunenburg and he would come home and . . . it seemed like nobody wanted to talk to him. And he said it seemed as if he was there and they didn't even see him because . . . they knew what [he] was there for. They knew [he] was there to ask for a chance. But he said, they wouldn't even talk to him. So, you know, that puts you down in the dumps. (Interview #9)

Opportunities for these men are limited. Most have never done anything except fish, and they have no training for anything else. With high unemployment rates, the prospect of employment in the fishery or in other industries in the local area appears bleak. Couples must choose between staying in the community or moving elsewhere to attempt to find employment. This is a difficult decision. Barbara, who has been married for over 20 years and is the mother of five boys, discussed the difficult possibility of moving:

> I don't think I'd want to move. . . . He's already mentioned to me about going to Vancouver. There's scallop fishing there and he wanted to go there to live, and I wouldn't even hear of it. Because I done that one time before. He uprooted mom and dad and all of us when we went to Newfoundland to live. And he done a different kind of fishing down there. . . . Yea, well he said that if it came to it that he would have no other choice, so if it came to that I would. But right now I'm

> not just going to uproot my family to move somewhere and it not work out. No I couldn't. I lived here all my life. (Interview #2)

Yet in an area of high unemployment, moving may be the only real opportunity for most of these men to find work.

In our interviews it became apparent that the current fisheries crisis affected women's attitude to work outside the home. Current workers saw their present job take on greater importance. Many women said they no longer worked to supplement their husbands' wages. Instead their wages were now the crucial ones. Older women spoke of staying on working rather than retiring as they had planned. Women who were not currently in the labour force spoke of returning to work. Wives who previously worked only in the home now take on outside employment. But for some, with no experience and little education, this is a daunting prospect. As Ina muses:

> Well you try and think about other possible things. Like the only solution . . . would probably be for me to go out and try to get some kind of a little job. Like I don't have no high education, so I can't expect to get too much. And it's the same way with him, like the only other thing that he done before he went fishin' was pump gas. (Interview #9)

The lack of financial security increases the anxiety within the household, putting additional responsibility on the wife, who is now the sole "breadwinner." As Holly remarks: "I always say to him, . . . I love my work, and . . . I wouldn't do without it, but I just don't want to be obligated to having to be the one to be the breadwinner, you know that type of thing, so" (Interview #8).

As the wife takes on these financial responsibilities, there is more pressure on the husband to take on some traditionally male household chores. Ina explained this process

> He can cook . . . say maybe, three times out of a month. . . . Nothing big and elaborate, but it's a meal (laughter). And when the winter was, looking after the snow. I never had to go out once and do any of the snow, he had looked after all that. And the same way with the mowing, he sees that all the mowing is done. And the garbage, he looks after the garbage. And he done up a lot of other little things that he never had time to do before, but with being home he done up them. We got our septic tank pumped out here just two weeks ago, we done that. (Interview #9)

Most men mow the lawn, take out the garbage and shovel the snow, but taking on chores such as the laundry, the cleaning, the cooking and child care is generally resisted. A few men like Harry, Holly's uxorious and compulsive husband, take on all the household responsibilities while she increases her work outside the home. This is how Holly's household is organized:

> I work part-time, which sometimes involves full-time work, and with extra shifts . . . I'm gone for 12 hours/13 hours at a time, and . . . he takes over the household duties. He does the laundry, the cleaning, everything, so it's good that way. It's really hard to keep the bills paid and . . . there's no extras, and it's like, you're used to a pay cheque coming in and . . . well it's two pay cheques, mine and his . . . and now it's just mine, so you learn to [adjust]. (Interview #8)

As we noted earlier, for some fishers being at home represents an unique opportunity to get to know their children, to do the repairs they have been promising to do for months or to take up an old hobby they have set aside. But the more common response is for men to simply hang around the house, sleeping, watching TV or videos, reading novels or drinking with their buddies. No matter how well the fisherman is integrated into the household, he's not happy being home, and he looks forward to going back to sea or getting a job. This sense of uselessness and boredom further erodes the fisher's self-esteem and may lead to depression and other psychological problems. Even Harry has problems coping with shore life. He feels worthless and unproductive. For some men, communicating their fears and anxieties is not easy. As Eunice says, "men are just not talking about it like the women are. They're keeping it maybe more to themselves, you know. I hear a couple of them once in a while saying how they wished there was more fish" (Interview #46).

Moreover, as the couple becomes more anxious about meeting financial needs, they may forget about their spouse's emotional needs. The tension associated with uncertain finances may lead to disputes where emotional responsibilities get confused with monetary responsibilities. The husband's frustration at not working and his loss of self-esteem, combined with the wife's frustration over the erosion of her autonomy, can lead to an unbearable tension between the couple. Amy, a woman in her early 30s with no children, described her life over nine months while they waited for her husband's off-shore scallop vessel to be readied:

> If he's home for an extended amount of time like he has been this year, it's like we both get on one another's nerves because we're not used to it at all. . . . [T]hey sold the boat he was on last year in November and he's waiting for the new one to get ready to go and that should be the end of this month, or the first week in July. We're going to raise the flag. . . . It's like every move I make it's like "Where are you going? What are you doing?" When he's out to sea I don't have anybody to answer to and ask those questions. It's just . . . well right now it's driving both of us crazy, because he's been home since November the sixteenth and this is the longest he's been home ever. Till he goes away, well, if we don't have one another killed it'll be fine. . . . One night we were sitting here and we were talking about when he retires. I said that when he retires I hope I'm dead. Because there's no way the two of us could live together. We couldn't live together everyday, day in day out. (Interview #1)

Although this woman's statement appears to be extreme, many other women echo her feelings. In this case, the couple recognized the difficulty, discussed it between themselves and have tried to deal with it in a constructive way. For them the end is in sight. But other couples just shut down any attempt to communicate. As Vera, a woman in her late 20s, who left her husband because of his drinking, stated: "We used to argue about stuff like that, and then it just got to the point it was a waste of time to argue. It was easier just to say nothing. So eventually he just did his thing and I did my thing, and—well you see what happened" (Interview #22). Once communication between the couple ceases, the probability of marital break-up is high.

Table 1
Comparison of Frequency of Consequences of Other People's Drinking Based on Data from This Study (as percentages)

Activities	In-shore sample	Off-shore sample
Serious arguments	30.9	36.7
Being humiliated	29.5	36.0
Marital or family difficulties	18.1	25.3
Being disturbed by loud parties	34.9	22.0
Being pushed, hit or assaulted	4.7	8.7
Having friendships break up	12.1	9.3
Having property vandalized	4.7	4.7
Having financial troubles	2.0	2.7
Passenger with a drunk driver	17.4	18.7
Accident because of a drunk driver	1.3	2.0
Sample size	149	145

Many wives fear that the stress that their husbands are under will lead them to drinking. This was Ina's predicament. Similarly, Isabel, a woman in her late 20s with a three-year-old child, said that her husband turned to drink rather than discuss issues; only after a few drinks would he say what had been bothering him. In some cases, frustration can lead to violence, especially when one or both of the partners drink. The consequences of others' drinking impinged on most fishermen's wives' lives, and a number of these problems were identified both in the survey and the in-depth interviews. These problems included "having serious arguments," "being humiliated," "having marital difficulties or family difficulties," "being disturbed by loud parties," "being pushed, hit or assaulted," "having friendships break up," "having property

vandalized" and "having financial troubles." Table 1 compares the frequency of reported occurrence of these events in the last year between in-shore and off-shore fishers' wives. With the exception of being disturbed by loud parties and having friendships break up, the off-shore sample appears to experience a higher frequency of these problems associated with others' drinking. Between 17 and 19 percent of women from fishing households reported being a passenger with a drunk driver and between 1 and 2 percent reported being involved in an accident involving a drunk driver.

In the major fishing centres in Nova Scotia, a disproportionately high number of fishermen's wives and household members receive counselling at local transition houses and abuse centres. In some areas over 65 percent of clients come from fishing households. Although these high numbers may simply reflect the demography of the community, the characteristics of the fishery, particularly the off-shore fishery, have increased the probability of spousal and family abuse: a matri-focal family life, a high-stress, industrialized workplace and little time to work out differences.[4] Lenore Walker (1984) argues that risk factors for battering occur in families where insecurity, jealousy, alcohol and substance abuse aggravate conflicts for men holding traditional values concerning women's roles. The cycle of long separation and short reunion strained the husband-wife relationship, but functional adaptations prevailed. Now those adaptations are themselves sources of marital strain. The erosion of autonomy and the high-stress, high-risk environment of the off-shore fishery increase the anxiety and erode the self-esteem of fishers regarding their family relationships. They work hard to provide for their families. But when they return from the sea, they enter an unfamiliar world. They have even less control there than at sea. With the reduction of the fishery, levels of anxiety for these men has not decreased but increased. Their self-esteem has been further eroded now both as fishers and as fathers and husbands.

Discussions and Conclusions

Oriel, a wife of 18 years who works outside the home, summarizes the effects of the fisheries crisis this way:

> A lot of people have gone elsewhere for jobs, or gone into other programs. Some people are trying to stay on in the fishing industry. Those that really want to stay on will stay on. Like my husband said, the strong will survive, the weak will pass on and find something else. I think it's going to make a difference in our neighbourhood in the sense that the younger generation, the young guys, the young boys or whatever coming up, won't really have summer jobs, say, handling the fish like they did in previous years. They'll have to either go to the city or find some other way of making money. When I grew up, all the young guys worked on the fishing boats, and that's gone. You can see that. There's no extra hiring because they don't need them. The three-man crew that actually gutted the fish out there, when they came in off the nets, are the ones that are

> salting them, are the ones that are doing everything when they come in. They've got no choice because they've gotta try to make a living at it. Where in previous years, if they had such a good catch, they could hire the younger kids to do some of the in-shore work that got done, where the fish got salted or whatever. So, that's gone. And it's gonna have an impact on the next generation, not my generation which is older, but my kids and that generation. It's really going to be affected by it. (Interview #40)

The fishery that Oriel describes is substantially different from the one that existed while she was growing up, and the fishery of the next century will be substantially different from the current one. Changes being wrought currently will lead to a smaller, more professionalized fishery concentrated in a few large ports. But the decline in the fishery does not only affect fishers. As Dorothy points out: "If fishing gets any worse, how is the whole community going to survive? . . . Everything we do is pretty well in the town of Lunenburg, so it's the little people, I say, little people like us, with the shore boats and things, that actually keep the town going" (Interview #29). As fishing families cut back on their spending, local merchants feel the effect. Grocers note a decline in "luxury foods" and a return to basic produce. Second-hand clothing stores such as Frenchy's or Bob's reported increased business, while ladies' wear and men's wear stores along the shore have declined. The small stores and amenities in towns such as Lunenburg depend on the fishers for year-round sales. Financial belt-tightening also means less socializing outside of homes as well. People stop going to movies, lounges, taverns and restaurants. Even events at community centres and church socials suffer from lack of participants. Communities rely more and more on the four-months-long tourist season to take up the economic "slack."

Although communities like Lunenburg and nearby Bridgewater will thrive because of their ability to maintain their fisheries enterprises while developing tourism and light industry, other fishing communities will not. Already, during the winter months, some small fishing ports along the shore more closely resemble ghost towns than the lively centres characteristic of the shore only a few years ago. This restructuring of rural Nova Scotia, which forces the young and middle-aged to move to the larger urban centres in search of work, will result in many coastal areas largely becoming retirement communities, rejuvenated only by summer visitors and tourists.

The fishery is an industry of boom and bust cycles, and many of these men have been unemployed before and have developed strategies to cope with short-term unemployment, such as fixing up their houses, repairing cars and other appliances. However, as it becomes apparent that employment in the fishery may not be possible, these coping mechanisms no longer function. Options which existed in the past, such as getting to know their family, developing social skills or taking on more family responsibilities, now hold no appeal. Instead, the erosion of self-worth, in some cases leading to profound depres-

sion and alienation, plagues many men as they search to find new meaning for their lives.

In all these cases, financial well-being has been eroded. More and more women are going out to work or are increasing their work outside the home. They are now taking on the task of "breadwinner"—a task that most do not strive for and one associated with increased stress. Many women still retain their traditional household duties, although some men may take on some household chores, most notably lawn mowing, garbage removal and snow shovelling. Moreover, the decline in wages, or the loss of work, erodes fishers' self-esteem and aggravates their anxiety. In some cases this can lead to drinking and family violence. As the crisis deepens, and as more and more people are affected, these types of behaviour may increase. No matter which situation these fishing households find themselves in, their previously beneficial coping strategies no longer meet the demands of their current situation and may actually hinder the development of new survival skills. They must now struggle to develop new ways to meet the challenges of fishing for a living.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this article focussing only on off-shore fishing families was published by the *Dalhousie Law Review* (Binkley 1995b). This project was supported by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grants #410-92-0518. A number of colleagues were extremely helpful at different stages in the research, in particular Richard Apostle, Jack Crowley, Jennifer Jarman, Victor Thiessen and *Anthropologica*'s anonymous reviewers. This research could not have been done without the help of the women and men who provided the crucial information, and to them I am very grateful.
2. I use the term "fishermen/fisherman" when I want to be gender specific or when quoting or paraphrasing informants; otherwise I use the term "fisher." I was constantly reminded throughout my research that the term "fisher" refers to a bird, a kingfisher, not to a person who fishes.
3. Some researchers further separate the independent fishery into mid-shore and in-shore fleets based on length of vessel and gear type. The in-shore vessels are under 35 feet in length, while the mid-shore vessels are over 35 but under 65 feet in length.
4. As in-shore fishing households take on more and more characteristics of off-shore fishing households, the incidence of violence may also increase. These questions were addressed in another article, "Household Response to Work Stress and Alcohol use Among Offshore Fishers" (Binkley 1996).

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HEAR ME SPEAK: ITALIAN AND PORTUGUESE WOMEN FACING FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: Declines in the principal groundfish stocks of New England led to the development of Amendment 5 to the New England Fishery Management Council's Multispecies Management Plan. Implemented about a year and a half ago, Amendment 5 incorporated a phased-in series of increasingly strict management measures. Recently, however, the management council took a proposed Amendment 7 to public hearing, a series of extremely strict measures intending not only to halt overfishing, but to begin stock rebuilding.

Two of the major groundfish ports in the northeast are Gloucester, dominated by first- and second-generation Italians, and New Bedford whose groundfish fleet is predominantly Portuguese. The women of the two ports face the same potential impacts associated with the current crisis in the fisheries. Loss of incomes, vessels and homes has already begun. When the public hearings for Amendment 7 were held, many Gloucester women attended and a number testified. In contrast, there were no Portuguese women at the hearing in New Bedford.

In Gloucester, the women have transformed an organization that began as a campaign to promote cooking of underutilized species of fish into an active lobbying force, collaborative problem-solving agency and proactive civic group. No similar organization has arisen in New Bedford. This article postulates that, contrary to public opinion, ethnicity does not explain the differences in the activities of the women of these two ports, offers some alternative reasons and suggests why these are significant for fisheries management.

Résumé: Le déclin des principaux stocks de poissons de bas-fonds de Nouvelle Angleterre a conduit au développement par Conseil de gestion des pêcheries de l'Amendement 5 portant sur le plan de gestion des multi-espèces. Mis en application il y a un an et demi, l'Amendement 5 comprend

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une série de strictes mesures, introduites progressivement. Toutefois, le Conseil de gestion a envisagé récemment une audience publique de l'Amendement 7 qui propose une nouvelle série de mesures extrêmement sévères pour arrêter la surpêche mais aussi pour reconstituter les stocks de poissons.

Gloucester et New Bedford sont deux des principaux de pêche des poissons de bas-fonds du nord-est des États-Unis. Le premier est dominé par des Italiens de première et deuxième génération, et le second a une flotte de vaisseaux de pêche principalement portugaise. Les femmes de ces deux ports doivent faire face aux mêmes impacts potentiels associés à la crise qui affecte les pêcheries: baisse des revenus, perte des vaisseaux et des maisons. Lorsque l'audience publique a eu lieu à Gloucester, des femmes étaient présentes et un certain nombre d'entre elles ont témoigné. Par contre, à New Bedford, il n'y avait aucune femme portugaise à l'audience publique.

À Gloucester, les femmes ont transformé une organisation, qui avait débuté comme une campagne de promotion pour la cuisine des espèces de poissons peu employés, en une force active de lobbying, et une agence de collaboration pour trouver des solutions aux problèmes actuels et en un groupe civique dynamique. À New Bedford, aucun groupe similaire ne s'est formé. Cet article postule que, contrairement à l'opinion publique, l'ethnicité n'explique pas les différences entre les activités de ces deux groupes de femmes; il offre des raisons alternatives et suggère pourquoi ces dernières sont importantes pour la gestion des pêcheries.

Introduction

Members of fishing communities often refer to fishing as "a way of life" (Gatewood and McCay 1988:126; McGoodwin 1990:24). Indeed, many attributes are common to the industry wherever in the world it is found. Conversations with otter trawl fishermen[1] in New Bedford and Gloucester, Massachusetts, in the 1990s echo conversations held in the 1980s with *pirogue* fishers of Guet N'dar, Senegal, which, in turn, echoed conversations with Portuguese-American fishermen in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in the 1970s (Hall-Arber 1975, 1988). One of the attributes that often surprises those who know little about the industry is how important the role of women frequently is to this stereotypical male occupation. While it is true that women who fish commercially are rather rare, documentation of women's shore-side activities reveal that their tasks are commonly essential to the functioning and continuity of the industry (Binkley 1995; Danowski 1980; Gladwin 1980; Hall-Arber 1988; McGoodwin 1990; Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988; Thompson 1985. See also Fields 1996 for a study of Alaskan women who fish).

This article considers the roles of women of fishing families in two important ports in Massachusetts: New Bedford and Gloucester. Commencing with a public hearing on proposed changes to the New England Fishery Management Council's Multispecies Management Plan which controls fishing for

groundfish (e.g., cod, haddock and yellowtail flounder), similarities and contrasts between the activities of women of the two ports are examined with the goal of identifying how a community gains and retains its voice.

Can differences in ethnicity explain the contrasts between the women of Gloucester and New Bedford in the levels and types of participation in their communities? This article suggests that ethnicity is only one factor among a host of other reasons that the voice of Gloucester in the fish management process is often female while it is rarely so in New Bedford. Other factors to be considered include: economic characteristics of the two cities; individual leadership and status of organizations; and attachment to community as a territorial unit.

Though social scientists have long grappled with the concept of community, the search for an appropriate definition has lately become relevant to fisheries management with the currency of "co-management" ideas. In early works, community was characterized as a rural font of social order and virtue contrasting with the disorder of modern cities. Redfield (1956), who observed that there was an urban-rural continuum, described the "little community" as "distinctive," "small," "homogeneous" (i.e., slow-changing) and "self-sufficient." Community implied face-to-face contact, a similar social organization and structure, similar values and world view. While early studies of fishing communities, such as those by Faris (1966), Firth (1946), Forman (1970) and Nemec (1972), tended to focus on small, peasant or isolated communities with congruence of geography and occupation, and a significant homogeneity, more recent work has sought to define communities of fishers in less circumscribed settings. Nadel-Klein and Davis (1988:41), for example, suggest that "fishing groups enmeshed in complex stratified societies may be usefully regarded as occupational communities."

In a way which recalls some of the earlier definitions, Dyer, Gill and Picou (1992) define a "population of individuals living within a bounded area whose primary cultural existence is based on the utilization of renewable natural resources" as a "natural resource community." Smith and Hanna (1993) also find that proximity in a community "as a territorial unit" is significant in "differentiating behaviors within a fishery," despite the availability of various electronic media that would allow the formation of alternative groupings such as those based on occupational position or status, independent of geography.

In fisheries, arguments can be made for either geographic communities or occupational communities, which can be further delineated according to species sought or gear utilized. How community is or should be defined may become critical to the success or failure of fisheries management as policy shifts toward the incorporation of community through co-management of fisheries resources. Pinkerton (1996) suggests, "it is organized interests with a legitimate stake in the sustainable management of the resource who are likely to be recognized as having a right to participate in some fashion in management

decisions and in co-managing bodies." This article raises the question of whether or not some fishing communities may need help organizing some of the unorganized interests in order to assure that all appropriate stakeholders are represented or involved in the co-management process.

Resource Management and Fishing Communities

"One of the central difficulties in the use of natural resources is the design of management systems that are effective, equitable, and efficient" (Hanna 1995). The worldwide declines in fisheries stocks over the last three decades, documented by McGoodwin (1990), indicate a general failure of fish management policy according to Acheson and Wilson (1996).

However, the work of Acheson and Wilson (1996), Dyer and McGoodwin (1994), Ostrom (1990) and Pinkerton (1989) suggest that more effective models of management, which would be less expensive to enforce, could be derived from traditional management techniques. None of these researchers suggest that traditional management systems are always or inevitably well designed for modern fisheries management (McGoodwin 1990), but all suggest that traditional management and knowledge should be incorporated where feasible and appropriate. For example, the successful management of the Lofoten fishery of Norway has been attributed to the incorporation of fishers' "practical and local knowledge of the fishery," so that the regulatory system is sufficiently sensitive to variations in the fishery (Jentoft and Kristoffersen 1989).

Co-management is being explored as a way to incorporate traditional forms of management with the more usual "top-down" or "command and control" management by government agencies that usually characterizes management of fisheries in the U.S. (Townsend and Pooley 1995). Co-management means that the stakeholders in a resource are part of a system of shared decision-making and joint administration with government (Berkes, George and Preston 1991; Pinkerton 1989).

The advantages of co-management over top-down management include the diminution of management costs, in part by stakeholders providing non-technical knowledge (lowering information costs) and by increasing management legitimacy, thereby making compliance more likely (decreasing monitoring and enforcement costs) (Hanna 1995). The participation of government with the local stakeholders ensures the protection of national or other interests such as habitat protection or biodiversity that go beyond the usual concerns of the local stakeholders (Townsend and Pooley 1995).

In the case of fisheries, the stakeholders include local communities as well as harvesters and processors. In coastal communities that host fishing fleets, the local economies frequently rely not only on the landing and marketing of the catch, but on the economic activity of an assortment of supporting businesses such as fuel and ice providers, chandleries, marine railways, pro-

cessors, truckers, etc. These communities have a long-term interest in maintaining the fishing industry.

The importance of recognizing the appropriate boundaries of a community must not be underestimated. In her research on natural resources that have been effectively managed by community groups, Ostrom (1990) points out that success is more likely if the groups can trust one another, communicate regularly, form binding agreements and arrange for monitoring and enforcing mechanisms.

This article considers the similarities and differences in a selection of the "organized interests" of Gloucester and New Bedford and offers explanations for the differences. Finally, implications of the differences for fisheries management are suggested.

Methodology

Forty-eight formal interviews in 1992, often conducted via the telephone, and generally of 60- to 90-minutes' duration, formed the baseline data for my ongoing research on the social impacts of changes in fisheries management. While an effort was made to select a random sample from the National Marine Fisheries Service's database of groundfish permit holders from Gloucester and New Bedford, the difficulty inherent in contacting fishermen who spend most of their time at sea meant that the selection of interviewees became opportunistic. In addition, because the permits are held by vessel owners, the sample is heavily biased toward these vessel owners and their spouses. Even so, because the majority of vessel owners actively fish as captains on their own vessels and fished in the past as crew members, their perspective often reflects the workers' as well as employers' points of view.

These initial interviews were open-ended, providing an opportunity for the fishermen, including both captain-owners and some crew members, their spouses and/or representatives, to cover a wide range of topics. Since then, attendance at New England Fishery Management Council meetings, Groundfish Committee meetings, public hearings, fisheries fora, Fish Expo and other special events has offered innumerable opportunities for follow-up interviews with attending fishermen, their spouses and/or representatives. In addition, I have participated in small-group discussions and focus group interviews in both locations.

A report on the first year of research results was widely circulated in the fishing communities for comment. Portions of the report were incorporated in the Social Impact Assessment component of the New England Fishery Management Council's Environmental Impact Assessment, required for submission of their Amendment 5 to the Multispecies Fisheries Management Plan (Hall-Arber 1993a).

This article is based on a re-examination of the data collected for the social impact assessment in order to more fully explore the roles of women associated with the fishing industry of New Bedford and Gloucester. Consequently,

neither formal nor informal interviews were planned so as to reach an equal number of male and female interviewees. Fewer women from New Bedford have contributed to the research than would be ideal. The data from Gloucester reflects a more even gender distribution.

The Fishery

The major species of groundfish (also referred to as the multispecies) caught in the northeast region of the U.S. include cod, haddock, yellowtail flounder, pollock, redfish, winter flounder (blackback), American plaice (dab), witch flounder (gray sole), white hake and windowpane flounder. Perhaps nowhere else is the diversity and productivity greater than in the Georges Bank region where 100 species of fish live and the "rate of fish production is among the highest in the world" (Brown 1987:47).

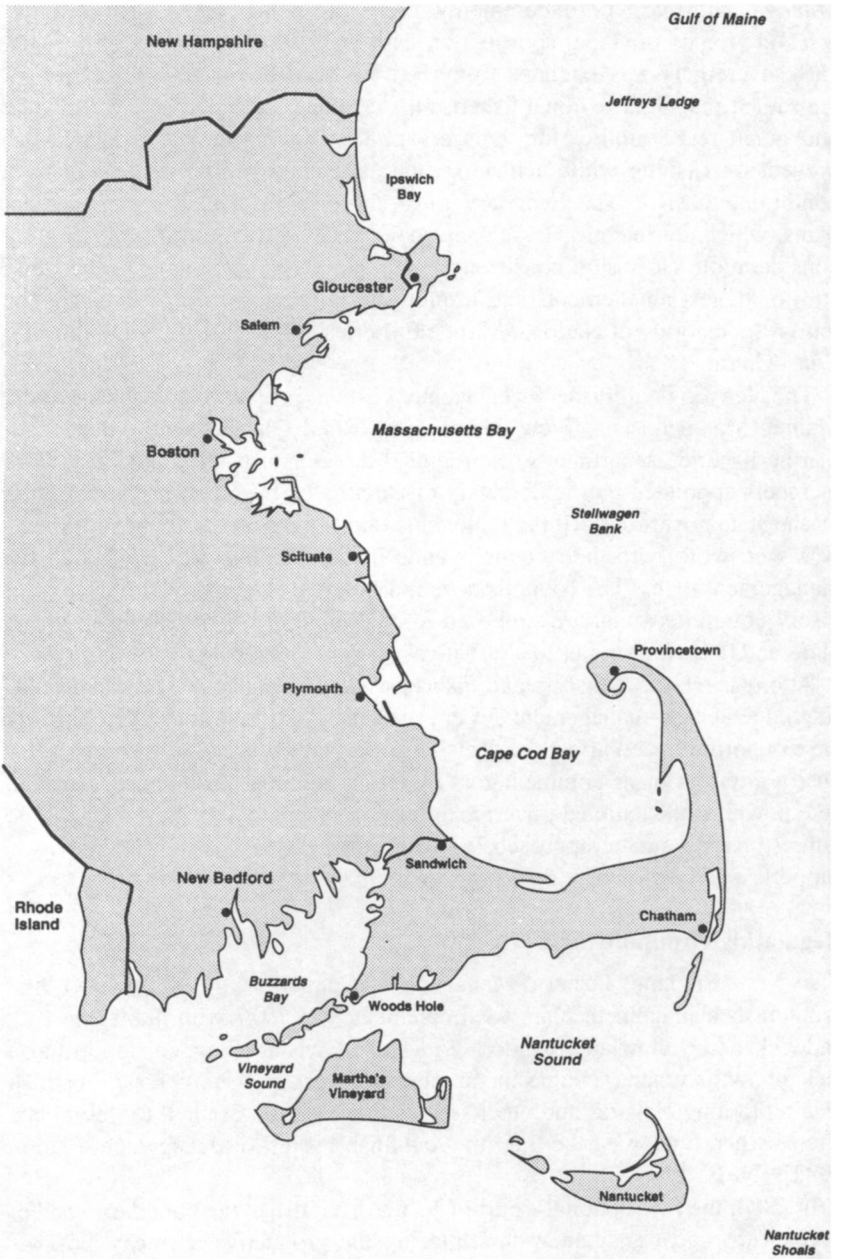
Draggers (otter trawlers) from New Bedford and Gloucester typically steam 18 to 24 hours to reach groundfishing areas on Georges Bank where they fish for 7 to 14 days before returning to port. In 1992, New Bedford was the home port for 144 draggers (most over 75 feet long). Gloucester had considerably fewer large trawlers with 32 draggers over 75 feet, 14 in the mid-range of 50-75 feet, and 25 day boats.

In Gloucester, the majority of the vessels are owner-operated; in New Bedford about 50 percent are owner-operated. Crews ideally number six, but in both ports most large vessels are working "short-handed" with four men in order to cut costs and increase the percentage share of those working.

Though Gloucester boats land cod, haddock and pollock most of the year, whiting is actively fished in the summer. Pelagic species such as herring, mackerel and menhaden, once an important part of the Gloucester catch but abandoned for the more lucrative groundfish, are increasingly being sought as effort on the groundfish is cut by regulation.

Yellowtail and other flounders formerly dominated the catch of the New Bedford groundfish boats. As in Gloucester, New Bedford groundfish boats are being forced to diversify their catch. Sea scallops have been a major source of revenue for the port of New Bedford, landed as a by-catch for the groundfish boats and as targeted species for scallopers. In 1992, 115 large scallopers (over 103 feet) used New Bedford as a home port. New Bedford's fishing industry has had to face cutbacks in both scalloping and groundfish—for the former beginning in 1982 when the Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Sea Scallops was approved and implemented, and in 1977 for groundfish when the first groundfish plan was implemented, but more severely since 1994 for scallops and 1995 for groundfish. Scallopers, in fact, face restrictions due to both management plans. Since they catch groundfish as a by-catch, scallopers are closed out of areas where the sea scallops are assessed as abundant, but the groundfish stocks are faltering.

Figure 1
Eastern Massachusetts and Its Fisheries



Source: This map was created by Clifford Goudey. Map is in public domain.

Management Structure

When the U.S. federal government passed the *Fisheries Conservation and Management Act* of 1976, commonly referred to as the FCMA or the *Magnuson Act* (for its principal sponsor) or, as it was re-authorized, the MFCMA, U.S. sovereignty was extended from the traditional 12 miles to 200 miles. At the same time, eight regional fisheries management councils were established and given responsibility for "conservation and management measures [to] prevent overfishing while achieving optimum yield from each fishery on a continuing basis." The Secretary of Commerce reviews the management plans, which are intended to balance ecological, economic and socio-cultural considerations, to insure consistency with national standards and other laws and to suggest amendments and promulgate regulations. Enforcement is the joint responsibility of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The New England Fishery Management Council consists of the heads of the Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Connecticut marine fisheries departments, the regional director of NMFS and 11 at-large members appointed by the Secretary of Commerce from nominees submitted by the state governors. All the regional councils have professional staff members who work with their councils and NMFS scientists to help design the management plans. The councils have independent scientific and industry advisory committees that are supposed to contribute to the development of the plans and to review proposed alternatives.

At one level, the New England Fishery Management Council could be considered to be a co-management system since users of the resource theoretically have opportunities to affect the decisions made either as council members, industry advisors or as commentators at public hearings. In practice, both the veto power of the national government over management plans and an *ad hoc* rather than systematic approach to incorporating views of industry advisors supports a perception of "top down management."

Regulating Groundfishing

The New England Fishery Management Council's (the Council's) first groundfish management plan was implemented in 1977 with quotas on cod, haddock and yellowtail flounder. Widespread mislabelling, misreporting, a lack of enforcement, increasing numbers of vessels fishing for groundfish leading to long closures and other serious flaws led the Council to "eliminate quotas when it adopted the Interim Goundfish Fisheries Management Plan in 1982" (NEFMC 1993).

In 1984, the International Court of Justice established the boundary line between U.S. and Canadian waters, placing the productive northeast peak of Georges Bank on the Canadian side of the line (ibid.). The large U.S. vessels

accustomed to fishing haddock in that area were forced to fish in other parts of Georges Bank, increasing the fishing pressure on other groundfish stocks.

Two years later, in 1986, the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (Multispecies FMP) was implemented. Among other regulations, minimum sizes were set or increased for witch flounder, American plaice, winter flounder, pollock, yellowtail flounder, cod and haddock. Over the next several years, Amendments 1 through 4 made relatively minor adjustments to the Multispecies FMP, though Amendment 4 noted that the next amendment would necessarily include rebuilding strategies for the principal stocks of groundfish that were overfished (NEFMC 1993).

Amendment 5

In May 1994, the hotly contested, greatly feared Amendment 5 to the Multispecies FMP was implemented. Using a wide variety of direct and indirect controls on fishing, Amendment 5 proposed to reduce fishing effort by 50 percent over the next five years (1994-99). Three months later, NMFS' Northeast Fisheries Science Center issued a Special Advisory Report in conjunction with the plenary session of the 18th Stock Assessment Workshop, informing all concerned parties that stock assessments revealed that Georges Bank cod was on the verge of collapse, joining yellowtail flounder and haddock on the list of species on the road to commercial extinction.

Emergency Action and Amendment 7

While people in the industry knew that landings of fish were down, most fishermen believed that the conservation measures being gradually introduced under Amendment 5 would be sufficient to conserve and rebuild the stocks. It was with great shock, therefore, that fishermen heard the scientists say in August 1994 that the stocks were so seriously depleted that without draconian measures there would be no way for the stocks to recover. Emergency action was taken by NMFS to close large portions of Georges Bank to all fishing. And so began a hasty effort on the part of the New England Council to develop Amendment 7, a plan to conserve and rebuild the stocks.

The Cities: Gloucester and New Bedford

New Bedford and Gloucester share a long devotion to the fishing industry, though in New Bedford the industry commenced with whaling and now has a large scalloping component, while Gloucester began as and has remained a groundfish fishery.

The groundfish fishery in New Bedford today is dominated by Portuguese and Portuguese-Americans while Sicilians and Italian-Americans are most prominent in Gloucester's groundfish fishery. In the 1970s and early 1980s, New Bedford had a significant Norwegian population involved principally in

the scallop industry, but by 1996 only a few Norwegian captain-owners remain. "Most of us have educated our children out of the fishing industry and will sell our boats when we're ready to retire," one Norwegian owner of a scallop vessel and a groundfish boat explained to me.

Economic Conditions

New Bedford is a larger city than Gloucester and, at least at one time, was more diversified. *Moody's 1990 Municipal Credit Report* describes New Bedford as a primarily residential community with "a large local fishing industry and a significant manufacturing component [that] adds diversity to the economic base." Since 1990, however, Polaroid, which was considered by *Moody's* as a major employer and taxpayer, has closed its plant. Once an important site for the textile industry, New Bedford has innumerable shuttered factories that lend a depressed and forbidding air to several areas in the city. The downturn in the fishing industry simply compounds difficulties for the city's already faltering economy. In addition to the loss of employment in the harvesting sector, employment in processing of fresh groundfish has also declined.

It is said that 40 percent of Gloucester's economy is based on fishing when all the support industries are considered such as fuel companies, ice companies, trucking firms, dealers and processing plants (Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce n.d.). However, many of these companies have been developing alternative products or sources of income as the local fishing industry diminishes. Processing plants, for example, import more fish than formerly in order to keep their lines working and ice companies have been bagging more ice for the restaurant and tourist trade.

In the last decade Gloucester has made an effort to diversify. A 45-minute drive and easy rail commute to Boston allows the city to serve as a bedroom community, but citizen activists and small-business owners have been encouraging alternative developments. For example, an industrial park was constructed to attract light manufacturing businesses, and the city is supporting efforts to further develop the tourist industry. Nevertheless, the city is anxious to retain its image as a fishing community.

Incomes and Education

The city of New Bedford as a whole is poorer than Gloucester, and educational attainment is lower. The 38 646 households comprising New Bedford's fishing and non-fishing population had a median income of $22 647 according to the 1990 U.S. Census. In contrast, the 11 550 households in Gloucester had a median income of $32 690. Although it is notoriously difficult to extract income information from individuals in the fishing community, informants agree that before Amendment 5 was implemented, skippers made anywhere between $60 000 and $100 000 and deckhands could make $30 000 to

$50 000 in New Bedford (reflecting the high prices of scallops and yellowtail flounder, the two most important species landed).[2] Gloucester fishermen's incomes were said to be a bit more modest, ranging from $15 000 for non-highliner crews to $55 000 for captains of off-shore vessels. In general, though, despite the hardships and long hours of fishing, the men could count on making a "good living." It is noteworthy that their incomes placed the New Bedford fishing families in a significantly higher income bracket relative to the median of the general population than did the incomes of the Gloucester fishing families.

The 1990 Census noted that of the 64 554 people in New Bedford over the age of 25 years, 49.7 percent were at least high school graduates and 9.7 percent were at least college graduates. In Gloucester, 75 percent of the population over 25 years old had at least graduated from high school and 20.4 percent had at least graduated from college. Fishermen in both Gloucester and New Bedford, particularly if they are immigrants, tend to have ended their formal education at 14 to 16 years old.

The Women and Their Organizations

The women of both New Bedford and Gloucester work in various aspects of the fishing industry—in office jobs, as bookkeepers in the settlement houses, for example, or in the processing plants. Others own their own businesses or work as teachers, nurses, secretaries, etc.

One man noted that while the women of Gloucester work outside their homes in a variety of jobs, they also tend to be very involved in their family businesses. Like wives in fishing communities around the world, Gloucester women historically have been the keepers of their family fishing vessel's (financial) books, keeping track of the quantity and values of the catch and paying crew as well as bills for fuel, ice, food, etc. (Cole 1988; Hall-Arber 1975; see also the literature review in Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988). In contrast, in New Bedford, financial service companies known as settlement houses have long been used by the majority of the fleet for their bookkeeping, paying the crew and the bills. Several of the settlement houses are owned and operated by women who are from Portuguese fishing families, but the services rendered are compensated for as a business rather than regarded as a family responsibility.

Gloucester

Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association was founded by a Gloucester-born daughter of Sicilian immigrants. Having learned English in school, Lena Novello took an active role as intermediary for her fishing captain, boat-owner father at an early age, translating for him during bank-loan negotiations and equipment purchases and handling money for the crew. Married at 21 to a

fisherman, Lena provided shore-side services for her husband's boat as well as raising six children and maintaining her household (Clark 1988).

One of the first projects that the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association undertook was to support the passage of the *Magnuson Act* in 1976 (Clark 1988:264) that stopped foreign vessels from freely fishing within 200 miles of our coast. At the same time, they offered support for the industry by encouraging the public to buy more domestic fresh fish, including underutilized seafood. Cooking demonstrations and sampling activities as well as the production of an accompanying cookbook were the primary foci of the organization. Later, as threats to the industry arose, such as the proposed lease/sale of portions of Georges Bank for oil drilling, the association continued to speak out at public hearings on behalf of the industry.

With over 125 members, the association continues in its activist role, seeking ways to better serve the fishing industry. In an effort to bring together city residents and other businesses as well as participants in all aspects of the fishing industry, in 1994 GFWA organized Vision 2020, a year-long process involving a series of brainstorming sessions focussed on the city's future. When the Department of Labor and the National Marine Fisheries Service needed an outreach person for their newly created, jointly funded, Fishing Family Assistance Center, Angela San Filippo, the president of GFWA was hired.

Sefatia Romeo, another very active member of the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association, took on the task of surveying the Gloucester fishermen to determine their numbers and their needs. When too few people returned the distributed survey, Sefatia called or visited the fishing families to discuss the importance of the survey and encourage them to respond. Partly as a result of that survey, a health-care initiative was proposed. Furthermore, these efforts led to the organization of a regional fishermen's association and eventually to a $2 million grant from the Department of Commerce to pilot a health-care program for the fishing industry.

Discontented with the fractured fishing industry in the region, an industry that tends to divide according to gear types, ethnicity, vessel size, fishing styles and any other differentiating factor, and recognizing that only a unified industry could hope to influence management of fisheries, GFWA approached the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston for help (see Hall-Arber 1993a and 1993b for a discussion of blame and divisiveness in the region's industry). GFWA's projects manager, David Bergeron, who was at the time also on the staff of St. Ann's Church in Gloucester, suggested that the group request a meeting with Bernard Cardinal Law, their bishop, when he came to Gloucester to perform the Blessing of the Fleet in 1994 (Gloucester is part of the Archdiocese of Boston). The meeting was arranged and GFWA presented their concerns and aspirations vis-à-vis the fishing industry in Massachusetts.

While being named to the College of Cardinals does not confer greater authority on a bishop, it is considered a high honour, offers the prelate greater access to the Pope and, as a result, the Cardinal has considerable political power (Bergeron 1996). Though New Bedford is not officially under the Boston Archdiocese, GFWA believed that the esteem accorded the Cardinal would entice fishermen from New Bedford to participate in any meeting he called. So, with the help of the Cardinal and his staff, a series of meetings with fishermen from New Bedford, Gloucester and Cape Cod, often held around the table in the residence of—and mediated by—Cardinal Law, led to the eventual formation of a new, non-sectarian organization called the Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership. One of the immediate goals of the partnership is to develop an affordable health-insurance plan for the fishing industry.[3]

In addition, the president of GFWA is a member of the Gloucester Fisheries Commission (the Commission), a town board established in 1956 by Gloucester's City Council comprised of "the mayor, three City Council members and five persons actively connected with production, processing or employment phases of the industry." The Commission is sworn to "investigate, advocate, and recommend measures for the promotion, preservation, and protection of the Gloucester fishing industry." Finally, GFWA is on St. Peter's Fiesta Committee which sponsors and organizes the festival during which the Blessing of the Fleet is held. The Committee is a private, non-profit, grass-roots organization that began as a neighbourhood religious association when fishing families lived primarily in the Fort area of Gloucester. Originally, the neighbours cooked food to share and gathered to say the rosary together. Later, families started making shrines, which eventually became more elaborate and were paraded around. In time, the celebration, while retaining its religious character, drew in non-fishing family participants so the Committee includes owners of local businesses unrelated to fishing. In addition to St. Peter's Fiesta, GFWA can be relied on to help organize any of the several waterfront festivals Gloucester holds in spring, summer and fall.

New Bedford

There is no organization comparable to GFWA among the women of New Bedford. The only existing wives' organization, the Offshore Mariners Wives' Association (founded in 1989), limits its work to organizing the annual Blessing of the Fleet. Even for that task, only a handful of women participate.

The Blessing of the Fleet is a tradition in many ports around the world where fishing families are Roman Catholic. Traditionally, in New Bedford, most vessels were annually hauled out of the water, painted and repaired shortly before the Blessing. The morning of the Blessing they were then decorated with lights, papier-mâché and/or streamers. At the Blessing, the decorated boats lined up and steamed one by one in front of a platform where

a bishop or priest stood with holy water which was sprinkled in the direction of the vessel. In the 1996 Blessing of the Fleet in New Bedford, fewer than 10 commercial fishing boats out of more than 200 participated in the parade.

Prior to 1969 there was an active organization of fishermen's wives in New Bedford. In fact, representatives of the New Bedford Fishermen's Wives Association were consulted when the GFWA was being initiated (Clark 1988). To date I have not located anyone who participated in that group. At least two women interviewed noted that "there used to be a wives' organization, but everyone drifted away." One man commented that "there was always some difficulty because crew members' wives were not comfortable with captain's wives." While the women still active in the group did not confirm that this was the underlying cause of the group's inactivity, it does reflect a perception of a conflict of values often inherent in the social structure associated with the fishing industry (Hall-Arber 1975; Husing 1980). The reality of the hierarchical structure of captain, mate/engineer and crew is often at odds with the egalitarian value of fishermen being independent, "their own boss," free to skip a trip or jump sites (i.e., change vessels) if they so desire and free to attempt to buy their own vessel. That the women tried to work together in an organization reflects the ideal of egalitarianism, but the reality of working with the spouse of one's husband's captain may have inhibited some of the crew members' wives.

In New Bedford, there are two patron saint feasts elaborately celebrated by Portuguese-American immigrants and their descendants from the Azores and Madeira. Though neither are specifically associated with fishing, unlike St. Peter's Fiesta in Gloucester, what is of interest to this article is the overt separation of men's and women's roles, with women's participation not publicly recognized for many years. From its founding in 1915 until 1952, only men were allowed to be Committee members for the Madeirans' Feast of the Blessed Sacrament, though women were actively engaged in designing floral decorations, ceremonial clothes and native costumes as well as working in the retail stands during the *festa* (Cabral 1989:38). The women's auxiliary was formed in 1952 and sent representatives to Committee meetings, but still had no voting role. Until 1972, the women marched behind the men in the parade. The Festa de Senhor da Pedra, organized by the people of Sao Miguel, Azores, has remained smaller scale and has a more religious emphasis than the Madeiran feast, but shares a similar pattern of emphasizing the men's role in decision-making in organizing the feast.

Public Reaction to Amendment 7

Both the New Bedford and Gloucester fleets will be hard hit by Amendment 7. Gloucester landed $11.7 million worth of cod, haddock and yellowtail flounder in 1993 and has 322 vessels permitted for multispecies, more than any other port (NEFMC 1993). New Bedford landed $19.6 million worth of cod,

haddock and yellowtail flounder in 1993 and had 302 multispecies permits (or 341 if New Bedford and adjacent Fairhaven are combined) (ibid.).

In their rush to complete Amendment 7, the Council failed to convene a meeting of their groundfish industry advisors to discuss the ideas being proposed. With the Council trying to avoid the delays inherent in listening to or discussing multiple or divergent views, neither the Groundfish subcommittee meetings, nor full Council meetings allowed much opportunity for commentary from the public. Consequently, the series of public hearings on Amendment 7 was the main opportunity for input from the average industry participant. Nevertheless, the Amendment 7 hearings were, on the whole, sparsely attended.

Several fishing industry participants commented that it was neither apathy nor good fishing that kept people from attending, rather "people have given up on the process." While other social scientists have noted that fishermen's attendance at public meetings is often poor because they are out fishing when meetings are held and because many are not comfortable with English or with the formal setting of most hearings, these fishing industry participants indicated that both the history of the management plan development and their interaction with the Council and NMFS has led vessel owners, captains and crew to believe that their views will be scorned by both the "suits"[4] and the scientists (Clark 1988).

Public Hearing in New Bedford

The New Bedford public hearing on Amendment 7, held in a large room at the Seaport Inn, Fairhaven, Massachusetts (just across a bridge from New Bedford), was attended by about 125 people, though the number fluctuated greatly as attendees drifted in and out over the course of the morning. The majority were news media, politicians, Council members and staff, academics, NMFS staff and members of the various environmental groups who have taken an interest in the status of the fish stocks on behalf of "all the people." In addition, there were several representatives of the Gloucester fishing industry in attendance, demonstrating a unity with the New Bedford fishing industry.

Here and there, perched on the padded folding chairs were small groups of Portuguese fishermen, vessel crews usually sitting together. Notably absent were the women of the Portuguese portion of the fishing community. The only two women present who might be said to represent the fishing community of the New Bedford-Fairhaven fleet were Norwegian-American, one the owner of a scallop boat, the other an owner of a scallop boat and a dragger. Neither of the women are members of the Offshore Mariners' Wives Association. There is only one Portuguese-American woman who owns off-shore vessels. She inherited them from her father.

There was little drama in the hearing, little emotion expressed. The hearing seemed fairly perfunctory. A Council staff member reviewed the high points

of the Plan in a brief (25-minute) summary. Comments from local politicians and major industry representatives were then heard and recorded. Although there is one major fishing organization with a female president in New Bedford, it was Howard Nickerson, the 80-year-old executive director of that organization, who commented on the Plan. The wives' association did not make any public comment. The Norwegian women warned that New Bedford and Gloucester would be the biggest losers with the new amendment, since it targets "the species we historically catch, and we have nothing else to turn to—unlike those farther to the south or north." Both argued that Amendment 5 was working and the fishermen should be allowed to continue making a living, which they did not think would be possible under Amendment 7.

Public Hearing in Gloucester

The most notable contrast between the New Bedford hearing and the hearing held a few days earlier in Gloucester, Massachusetts, was the active participation of the wives of the Italian portion of the Gloucester fishing industry. The Gloucester hearing at Sadler Function Hall was attended by about 150 Italian, Italian-American and non-Italian fishermen, their wives or significant others and a few children, along with the usual others—the news media, politicians, Council members and staff, NMFS staff, academics and environmentalists. Emotions were much more evident. Several speakers apologized for their less-than-perfect English. The president of the wives' association and several other women addressed the Council panel.

Many of the speakers in Gloucester noted that, though they had originally opposed Amendment 5, they were willing to work with it. Many also commented that they were not saying that Amendment 5 should remain unchanged, that they were willing to accept modification for stock rebuilding, but that Amendment 7 was too drastic a change and would lead to financial disaster. The spectre was raised of lost homes, lost college tuition, a lost way of life and concomitant breakdowns in families, leading to concerns about health.

Comparing and Contrasting the Roles of Women

Perhaps it was the contiguity in time of the two hearings, the similarity of format, the same mix of scientists, environmentalists and other observers and the familiar tone of the politicians' remarks that sharpened the perceived contrast between New Bedford and Gloucester, but the lack of Portuguese women's participation in New Bedford's public hearing suggested that there are systemic differences in the roles of women in the two fishing communities.

The most obvious difference between the two groups is ethnicity. In individual interviews, both men and women in Gloucester and New Bedford agreed that there were major differences in the roles of women in the two communities. What was striking was that differences attributed to ethnicity were

almost always the first explanations offered. In her study of Italian-Americans in California, Di Leonardo (1984) debunks the assumption of homogeneous ethnic culture, pointing out the infinite variety within ethnic groups due to such differences as class, age, origin, occupation, etc., a point with which Lamphere (1987:xv) agrees, based on her study of Portuguese and other ethnic groups in Rhode Island. Furthermore, as studies of ethnicity have pointed out, allegiance to a particular ethnic group is often situationally selected by individuals. Simmel (1955) notes that individuals in the modern world are entangled in a "web of group affiliations," each making varied demands for commitment. Class, gender, religion, regional identity all play a role, affecting individual's choices in various situations.

Nevertheless, while people may be aware of such differences, ethnicity remains a powerful symbol for individuals who use it to categorize and explain what they regard as the positive attributes of their own group and the negative attributes of others. In addition, ideals or norms and real behaviour are often confounded in discussions of differences between people. For the purposes of this article, the characteristics attributed to each of the ethnic groups that colour the perceptions of outsiders or are offered as explanations by members of the group will be discussed below.

Sicilians in Gloucester

When Angela San Filippo, president of the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association since 1978, first started publicly speaking out on issues concerning the fishing industry, she was criticized by many in the community, but particularly by the men. Gambino (1974) explains that the ideal of womanliness (*la Serieta*) for Italians is for a woman to be the core of the family and the cohesive force that binds the family together. Reportedly, in Sicily, achievement of the ideal was believed easier if the "core of the family" remained at home.

In fact, regardless of the ideals—or ethnic stereotypes—attributed by numerous authors to southern Italians, in reality there were women who were active in the public domain in Sicily (Banfield 1958; Cornelisen 1969; Gans 1962). For example, in the 1950s Angela's grandmother was one of the few people in her Sicilian village who was literate. Angela remembers fishermen asking her grandmother to read regulations to them, write letters or travel to other villages with messages from the residents of her fishing community.

Angela recognized the importance of her efforts to speak on behalf of the industry and was not intimidated by the disapproval of some in her community. Instead, in public meetings she occasionally described her grandmother's role, telling, for example, of the time as a little girl she went with her grandmother to meet with the Coast Guard on behalf of a fisherman. The stories of her grandmother remind those who emigrated from her village in Sicily of the acceptability of women's leadership in public domain activity and indicate to

others that there was legitimate precedent for activism. Eventually, the fishermen began to realize that it was valuable to have a voice in fisheries management and they recognized their own lack of time and inclination to participate in meetings, so that, albeit with mixed feelings, they have grown to appreciate the role of Angela and the other wives. In addition to taking the time and having the inclination to speak for the Gloucester industry, Angela is literate in English, a skill not widely shared among Sicilian-speaking fishermen. Given the proliferation of written materials necessary to understand regulatory change and its impacts on the fisheries, her skill is particularly valuable.

In talking about their own ethnic background and how norms have changed over time, the Gloucester women indicate that changes in the Gloucester fishing community's attitudes toward the "proper role" of women have kept pace with the media-inspired image of middle-class communities in the United States and "the historic movement of increasing numbers of American women into the labour force [during the 1970s]" (Di Leonardo 1984; Lamphere 1987:15). For example, it is considered acceptable to work outside the home, pursue advanced education, become involved in politics, allow daughters to date, drive, etc. Thus the women, while proud of their Sicilian heritage, are quick to note that, unlike some other ethnic groups, they are as progressive as the majority of American women. In reality, of course, lack of child care and expenses constrain the pursuit of both work and advanced education, particularly now that fishing incomes are diminishing.

Portuguese in New Bedford

Based on their vacation visits, the Portuguese women of New Bedford claim that change has not been widespread in Portugal and the Azores. New Bedford women believe that the Portuguese and Azorean women still live in a very restrictive, closed, patriarchal society that also lacks a tradition of political participation. While Judy Ramos, a Portuguese-American married to a Portuguese-born New Bedford fishermen, is active in the public sphere in her role as vessel owner and president of the Offshore Mariners Association, most of the Portuguese-born women are not.

In describing Sao Miguel, anthropologist Cabral (1989:37) noted, "Although women are advancing in the commercial sector, Azorean men still encourage their wives and daughters to remain within the traditional domestic sphere." Other research in an unnamed northeastern U.S. community emphasized the "cultural values of hard work, close family ties, respect for authority and protection of females" among Portuguese immigrants (Becker 1990). The implication, of course, is that norms and traditions of at least some communities in Portugal have emigrated with the people and may, with rare exceptions, keep women out of the public sphere. Nonetheless, Lamphere's (1987) work among Portuguese female immigrants and Di Leonardo's (1984)

work among Italian-American female immigrants, as well as more general studies of ethnicity, suggest that stated norms and values gloss over the varieties of choices and behaviours in ethnic communities and thus lack explanatory power.

Furthermore, it is clear that the Portuguese women of New Bedford's fishing community are not housebound. In fact, one informant said that it was precisely because so many wives of fishermen work outside the home and fishery now, due to the precarious financial position of most of the fishing families, that the New Bedford fishermen's wives' organization is active only for the Blessing of the Fleet, rather than as broadly active as the Gloucester group. However, because the most active participants in GFWA also hold jobs outside their home, this reason is not sufficient explanation.

While the cultural values associated with Portuguese ethnic affiliation were most often offered by non-Portuguese as the explanation for the Portuguese women's lack of public participation in the management process, one Portuguese woman offered an alternative explanation. This daughter and wife of New Bedford fishermen explained that everyone is so terribly discouraged that they see no point in participation because, when they have spoken in the past, it made no difference in the design of the Fishery Management Plans. Her plaint had nothing to do with ethnicity, but voiced feelings common to both men and women in New Bedford and Gloucester.

This widespread perception of the fishing industry's lack of impact on management plans is not shared by many managers or scientists of NMFS. However, they do recognize that for too many years there has been a failure to explain the science and the management so that it is comprehensible to fishermen. In one conversation, a NMFS administrator mentioned that when the New Bedford groundfish fleet switched over to the Portuguese and Portuguese-Americans, he was not able to maintain informal contact with the fleet, so whatever informal exchange of information had occurred in the past ceased. Some managers also acknowledge that because the fishermen's information is generally presented anecdotally, it is not usually regarded as contributing to science, but more often is attributed to the promotion of self-interest.

Commitment to their Community in the United States

Another difference between the women of Gloucester and the women of New Bedford that correlates with ethnic affiliation is the strength of commitment to a future in the U.S. Return migration to Portugal is considered an option by many of the New Bedford fishing families while the Sicilian families reject the idea of leaving Gloucester or the U.S.

In general, the Portuguese fishing families in New Bedford seem to have maintained stronger ties with their relatives in Portugal than have the Italians of Gloucester with their relatives in Sicily. Reportedly, many people have

bought apartments or have kept ownership in homes in Portugal, and take annual vacations there to visit relatives.[5]

One woman sadly said that when (notice that it was not "if") they lose their boat and home here in New Bedford, at least they will have somewhere in the world to go. She said that some people will hang on here just until their children finish school, then will move to Portugal. She admitted that it would be very difficult for her personally because on her trips to Portugal she observed that the women there adhere to a much stricter, traditional code of behaviour than do women here. (Though married to a Portuguese fisherman, she was born in New Bedford and it may be that she is unable to recognize changes that have occurred in Portugal.)

Despite the expressed fatalistic resignation to the potential for repatriation to Portugal, in this particular case, six months after the conversation, the woman had opened her own business in New Bedford, a store with no connection to the fishing industry. It may be that the other women who have opened businesses or work elsewhere do so in part to forestall a return to Portugal.

The Italian women interviewed do not regard a return to Italy (or, more accurately, Sicily) as an option. Their children and their lives are focussed in the U.S. One woman spoke of the pain of leaving her natal village in Sicily and said that she could not possibly inflict that pain on her children. As part of an active organization, the women of Gloucester are determined to find ways to survive here. Women who can barely speak English are taking retraining courses to try to find occupations that allow them to supplement their family's income from fishing. Children are being encouraged to stay in school with the goal of finding employment outside the fishing industry.

What other factors contribute to differences between women's roles in Gloucester and New Bedford? There seems to be a difference in organizational capacity due to economic characteristics of the two cities.

The Cities' Contrasting Images

The image of Gloucester in the public eye is inextricably linked to the image of the "old salt" peering through the mist, hanging on to the wheel of his schooner, an image enhanced by statue, story and song. New Bedford's historical image is associated with whaling. Perhaps the ascendancy of marine mammal protection and whale watching has left a less than positive image of the city in the public eye?

Even without lingering image problems associated with whaling, New Bedford suffers from a long history of loss: ships lost in the Civil War and the boom and bust of the textile industry are particularly striking memories. Remnants of lost manufacturing litter the landscape with boarded-up buildings. Now, dilapidated and half-sunken fishing vessels tied to ill-kept piers lend credence to an impression of New Bedford as a depressed area.

Furthermore, New Bedford is a larger city with attendant urban ills of poverty, health and drug problems, and an educational system struggling to cope with the needs of a culturally diverse society. Because of the pervasive poverty in New Bedford and the generally low level of formal education among the whole population, there is fierce competition for unskilled and low-skilled jobs.

Gloucester gives the impression of a city with more optimism about the future than does New Bedford. While Gloucester fishermen place in the lower ranks of formal educational achievement (among all Gloucester residents) and are thus less competitive for alternative jobs, their children are increasingly successful in school.

Gloucester's optimism is also directed toward the fishing industry itself. In New Bedford, the latest effort to revitalize the economy is revolving around a proposed casino. In Gloucester, the efforts are more diversified, for instance, focussing on adding value to seafood, through better handling techniques and development of marketable products for mackerel, herring, dogfish (or Cape Shark) and other "underutilized" species (Hall-Arber 1996). This perceived optimism may contribute to the ability of the community to organize around the fishing industry since the goals are viewed as still obtainable.

Filling a Niche

While the mayors of both cities express support for the fishing industry at public hearings, the state-level congressional representatives from Gloucester are particularly active in initiating and/or supporting legislation that benefits the industry. This may be due in some part to the activism of the GFWA which keeps the politicians aware of their fishing constituency.

Both cities have several organizations that support the fishing industry, but since the mid-1970s it is the wives' association in Gloucester that has taken the organizational lead in that city. Because of Gloucester's geographic proximity to Danvers where the majority of Council meetings are held, GFWA will often encourage fishermen who are laying over between trips to attend, sometimes calling them 30 minutes or so before the subject of interest is to be considered. The attendance of the fishermen at these meetings, where GFWA usually testifies, reinforces the sense that GFWA is properly representing their views. New Bedford is at a disadvantage in that it is at least a two-and-a-half-hour drive to Council meetings, too far for a fisherman to work on his boat a bit in the morning and then jump in his car so he can go to the meeting.[6]

The organization of the women of Gloucester has grown gradually over time, but has become much more active in the last few years, filling an existing vacuum. The need of the industry in general and the dragger fleet in particular for representation had grown. There was no organization of off-shore dragger fishermen poised to fulfill that need. In addition to representing fishermen at

meetings, GFWA has undertaken various projects to draw attention to the industry, improve its returns and diversify its efforts.

New Bedford fishermen by contrast, perhaps because their relatively higher incomes could financially support professional representation, have several organizations representing captains, owners and crew, as well as a relatively new umbrella organization, the Seafood Coalition. It may be that the women of New Bedford have not organized as intensively as the Gloucester women because they do not see an unfilled niche.

Individual Leadership

Parallelling the "skipper effect" that posits individual capabilities as significant in fishing success, the rise of GFWA as a significant player in the industry might be partly attributed to the effectiveness of its president (Durrenberger 1993; Durrenberger and Palsson 1982, 1986; Palsson 1991; Palsson and Durrenberger 1990; Thorlindsson 1988). While her leadership is often criticized, most people recognize the charismatic qualities and fierce loyalty to the fishing industry of Gloucester that characterize Angela. Despite setbacks in her own family's involvement in fishing and the constant struggle to help those faced with financial and/or psychological ruin, she remains hopeful that each new project, new collaborative effort or new opportunity to represent the industry will make a positive difference for the whole community.

In New Bedford, the most frequently heard and recognized voice of the fishing community is male. Howard Nickerson, executive director of the Offshore Mariners Association, attends NEFMC meetings, public hearings, meetings with other fishing industry representatives and meetings with politicians to represent the fishing captains and owners of this group. Howard appointed Judy Ramos, groundfish vessel-owner and Portuguese-American, as president of the Offshore Mariners. Judy is a woman with strong views on the industry and its management who serves as confidante to many of the fishermen in the fleet. She has become discouraged by the apparent lack of concern on the part of managers for the likely social impacts of Amendment 7 and has increasingly withdrawn from the public fray.

Other voices of the New Bedford fishing industry are also male and corporate—the directors of the New Bedford Seafood Coalition and the Greater New Bedford Fishing Family Assistance Center, for example. Each has become involved with aspects of helping New Bedford's groundfish industry cope with change, but no single organization or individual in New Bedford, male or female, has developed the variety of approaches that characterize GFWA's and Angela's efforts.

What the individual's effect is upon the potential for organizing women in the two ports is a matter worthy of further investigation. Since its founding, GFWA has had only two presidents, both of whom have been forward-

thinking, engaged individuals with strong leadership qualities. Although there have been at least two women's fishing industry-related organizations formed in New Bedford, neither has maintained a high-profile, activist agenda. To what degree this may be attributable to leadership should be considered in future research.

Conclusion

Co-management has been suggested by well-respected social scientists as a potential solution to some of the drawbacks attributable to the "top-down" management characteristic of fisheries management in the U.S. One of the strengths of co-management is that local knowledge can be incorporated into the process of management through the participation of groups representing community interests. Furthermore, it is assumed that as co-managers, users are more likely to abide by regulations they helped define than those imposed from outside or "above."

However, what constitutes community, and who represents it, in industrial settings varies. For example, in Gloucester, the voice of the fishing community is often Angela San Filippo's. It is a voice gained through constant use despite constraints associated with ethnicity and appropriate gender roles. The voice of the fishing industry in New Bedford, however, is much less likely to be female.

The defining of a community and its voice may be critical to effective fisheries co-management. The community is likely to include fishermen, their spouses and children, and others in subsidiary or related industries. The community may be defined geographically, by gear or by species, but must be regarded as legitimate by participants in the management process.

Equally important is that the community so defined be represented by those who are identified by the community as legitimate decision-makers on their behalf. As noted earlier, Pinkerton (1996) suggests "it is organized interests with a legitimate stake in the sustainable management of the resource who are likely to be recognized as having a right to participate in some fashion in management decisions and in co-managing bodies."

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that some who have a legitimate stake in the resource and its management may not be organized for reasons outside of their control. This article points out, for example, that while women are legitimate stakeholders in the fisheries resources, factors that can inhibit their organizing, and thus the recognition of their voice, include: the economic environment of their city, the existence or absence of active fishermen's organizations, strength of commitment to a future in the U.S., ethnicity and individual personalities.

In conclusion, if the new models of management require identification of small-scale units (e.g., communities) appropriate for handling aspects of

fisheries management, as Acheson and Wilson (1996) suggest, systematic ethnographic research should be a high priority, both to identify legitimate, organized interests like the GFWA and to determine if there are other legitimate interests, such as the Portuguese women of New Bedford's fishing industry, who may need help organizing in order to have a voice.

Afterword

A new organization called Shore Support was recently formed in New Bedford. It is explicitly modelled on the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association. Debra Shrader, wife of a Portuguese fisherman and Fisheries Outreach Enterprise Agent for The New Bedford Working Capital Network, is the enthusiastic founder. With the help of colleagues from Working Capital and a few bilingual community members, she has just completed interviewing dragger and scallop fishermen and spouses, individually and in focus groups, primarily to determine if self-employment would be a viable option for fishermen. In the relatively short time Shore Support has been in existence, Debra has referred 14 families to social services, attended various fishery management meetings and has begun to make the organization's presence known. She feels that her group will be able to represent the "rank-and-file" fishermen.

Interestingly, the recently released NMFS report on 1996 landings in New Bedford showed an increase in value. Moreover, also within the last year, a development grant of $400 000 has been obtained in order to further plans to build a world-class aquarium with a theme that focusses on the heritage of whaling and fishing in New Bedford. The aquarium project has taken the place of the casino as an image-enhancing, tourist-attracting and job-creating effort. Efforts to include the Portuguese fishing community in the advisory process for the development are just beginning.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. Both men and women who fish in the northeast region prefer to be known as fishermen so I have retained that term for all who fish in this region. The gender neutral term "fishers" is used for others.
2. Because fishermen rarely offer information about their own financial status, I cannot say for sure that these high incomes are correctly attributable to groundfishermen. Because many of the vessel owners in New Bedford own both a groundfish and a scallop vessel, it is possible that those interviewed took the higher income of their scallop vessel crews and just glossed it as "my fishermen make. . . ." In addition, scallop boats also catch groundfish, though their income is higher from the scallops.

3. Caritas Christi, the health system of the Archdiocese of Boston, and the Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership sponsored a formal survey of the health-care needs of the whole state's fishing industry that has recently been completed. Upon analysis of the data, a health-care plan for industry participants will be designed.
4. Managers, who are almost always dressed more formally than fishermen in the audience during Council meetings, are usually the ones being referred to as "suits." The term is a derisive, though accurate, appellation.
5. Only relatively recently have I begun to include questions about property ownership outside of the U.S. However, when asked, several New Bedford informants noted that "everyone" has at least an apartment in Portugal. The women of Gloucester mention relatives who still live in Sicily, but rarely indicate ownership of property there.
6. Captains and crews of trip boats (i.e., vessels that traditionally took trips of seven to ten days to Georges Bank) in Gloucester are less likely to be able to attend Council meetings than those of day boats. But even when the trip boats are at the dock, because there is always a plethora of preparation or repair activity before the next trip, New Bedford fishermen are at a disadvantage compared with Gloucester fishermen since they would have to lose a whole day for travel and meeting attendance.

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CRAFT DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CRAFTS: ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES OF LABRADOR WOMEN IN A CHANGING FISHERY[1]

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Abstract: Like women in other coastal regions of the North Atlantic, Labrador women have a long history of adapting to the exigencies of life in a fishing, hunting and trapping society. For over 60 years crafts production has provided these women the means to contribute cash to household incomes, especially during times of economic hardship. In this article we explore the creation of early rural development initiatives by the International Grenfell Association and other philanthropic organizations that provided craft skills, instruction, materials and access to markets for these craft products. We explore further how these early development schemes have undergone change since their inception and how contemporary Labrador women view and organize themselves in craft-production activities within the broader context of community development issues.

Résumé: Tout comme les femmes d'autres régions côtières de l'atlantique nord, les femmes du Labrador ont une longue histoire d'adaptation aux exigences de la vie d'une société axée sur la pêche, la chasse et le piégeage. Pendant plus de 60 ans, la production artisanale a permis aux femmes d'accroître les revenus familiaux en particulier lors des périodes de pauvreté économique. Cet article explore le développement des premières initiatives rurales lancées par l'Association Internationale Grenfell ainsi que par celle d'autres associations philanthropiques qui ont fourni les techniques d'artisanat, la formation, les matériaux et l'accès aux marchés permettant de vendre ces produits artisanaux. Les auteurs vont plus loin dans leur exploration de ces projets de départs qui se sont modifiés depuis leur insertion. Ils examinent de plus, comment les femmes de Labrador contemporain organisent la production de l'artisanat dans le contexte plus vaste du développement communautaire.

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Introduction

Since the turn of this century, social service providers, health care professionals, clergy, provincial development workers and individual Labradorians have grappled with the question of how to increase the income of fishers who live along that rugged coast. Over the years, the numerous, local, provincial and philanthropic schemes have met with only limited success. In various permutations, a focus on the development of a craft industry has been part of all of these schemes, in particular as it relates to the improvement of women's opportunities to contribute cash to household incomes. There are a number of profound changes which have occurred in Labrador in the last decade, such as the catastrophic demise of the cod fishery, the negative impacts of sealing protests on the sale of pelts and other furs, and tighter controls in the salmon fishery. These changes have contributed to an urgent need to find solutions to the short- and long-term socio-economic problems of coastal Labradorian people. Social-scientific research has focussed on understanding and remedying these conditions in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. While such studies have made important contributions to understanding the conditions under which these fishers live, they have focussed largely on fishery policies, the economics of the fishing industry or the social organization of fishing crews. The subjects of these studies have been predominantly male fishers from the Newfoundland portion of the province. Less attention has been given to the conditions under which Labradorians, and women (in particular, Labrador women), live and their potential for contributing to the economic recovery of the region. Some important exceptions include the work of Brice-Bennett (1992), Cahill and Martland (1993), Davis (1988), McCay (1988), Neis (1988) and Porter (1985), among others.

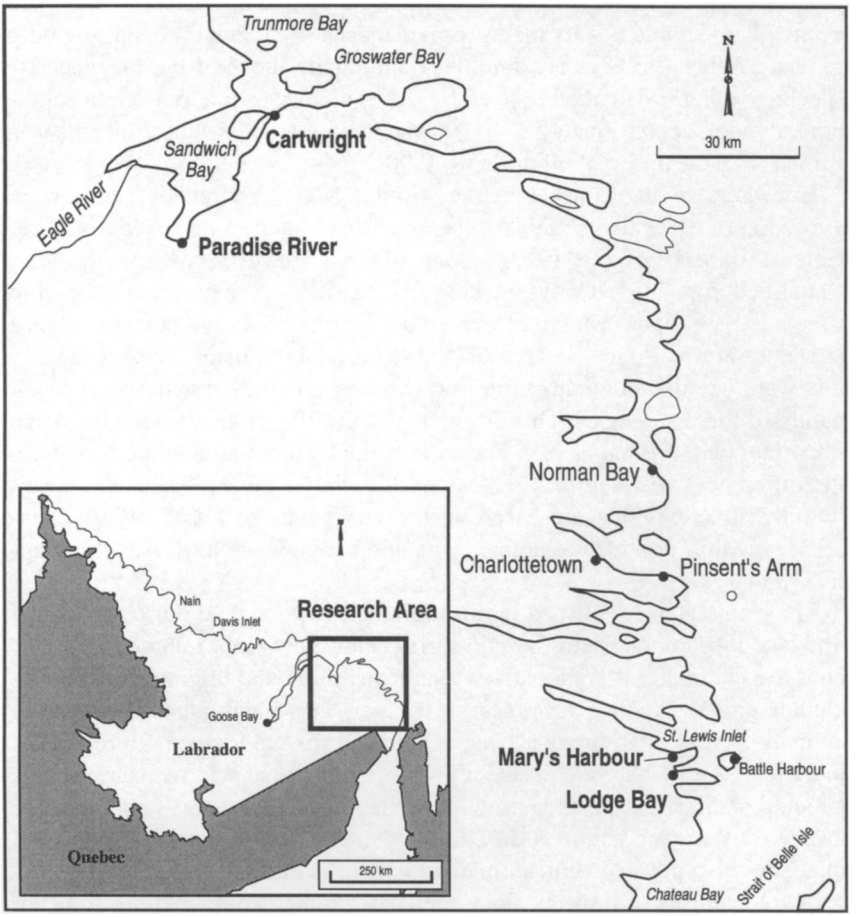
The goal of this article is to explore the role of crafts production in providing Labradorian women with the means to earn an income and contribute to the local cash economy. To this end, we examine the barriers to the development of crafts as a significant economic enterprise in coastal Labrador since the demise of Canada's east coast cod fishery.

We begin with a discussion of the historical context of craft production, and then turn to the organization of contemporary craft groups and women's involvement in them. Following this, we examine the nature of crafts production and, finally, focus on the barriers impeding the florescence of crafts production in these difficult times. An exploration of these features and their various linkages requires some familiarization with the research locale. The following section provides a brief ethnographic overview of the south coast of Labrador.

Description of the Study Area

Labrador, roughly the size of Italy, constitutes the eastern boundary of Canada's sub-Arctic and makes up the larger and northern portion of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The research area is situated along a jagged stretch of isolated coast and off-shore archipelagos between Sandwich Bay and Mary's Harbour (see Figure 1). In these two areas the total population ranges between 1200 and 1500 persons.

Figure 1
Map of Labrador's South Coast



Field research upon which this article is based was conducted in the vicinity of Groswater and Sandwich Bays by Karen Szala-Meneok in 1976, 1979-80 and in 1987, and by Kara McIntosh who worked along the south coast in the

Battle Harbour region in 1995. McIntosh's field work focussed on gender and rural development initiatives while Szala-Meneok's was grounded in a broader-based ethnographic context that included issues of contingency, decision making and features of temporal and spatial organization characterizing this sub-Arctic region.

People along the south coast of Labrador have devised what we refer to here as a modified foraging adaptive strategy consisting of fishing, hunting, trapping, gathering and some wage labour. A large portion of the coastal and hinterland regions are traversed throughout the annual cycle to pursue various extractive activities. In a biannual migratory transhumance, families move from protected winter settlements in the bays to the coastal archipelagos and back again. These winter settlements provide access to hunting and trapping grounds. When on the coast, families traditionally moved from one species-specific fishing site to another over the short summer fishing season. In southern Labrador, approximately 80 to 90 percent of a family's annual income was earned from the fishery until the early 1990s.

Elsewhere in the North Atlantic, similar adaptive strategies have been viewed as "seasonally pluralistic economies" (Andersen and Wadel 1972:3, Cole 1991 and Löfgren 1979, among others). However, we use the term "modified foraging adaptive strategy" as a way of emphasizing the core foraging base upon which contemporary coastal Labradorian subsistence strategies are built (see Smith 1987a, 1987b; Szala-Meneok 1992, 1994). In this way, we also draw attention to the strong Aboriginal and boreal forest nature of these strategies. This differentiation, while subtle, is nonetheless an important one. It is along such lines, for example, that Labradorians point out the differences between themselves and Newfoundlanders. These are meaningful distinctions that are based on the viewpoints of Labradorians themselves and thus provide researchers with another view of North Atlantic adaptive strategies.

The primary species fished in this region are salmon, cod (currently halted due to a 1991 moratorium), Arctic shrimp and snow crab. Labradorians also hunt a wide range of land and sea mammals, birds and migratory game, including caribou, moose, bear, seal, ptarmigan, geese and ducks. Fur-bearing animals such as otter, marten, lynx, beaver and fox are trapped. To round out the larder, Arctic hare are ensnared by men and women. In the summer and autumn, shellfish, seabird eggs, wild berries, legumes, plants and fungi are gathered by women and men. In Labrador's more recent history, women and men have also pursued short-term employment with the few businesses, government agencies or projects along the coast. Some people may travel as far away as Goose Bay (an important Labrador centre at the head of Hamilton Inlet) to secure part-time employment. This supplements income derived primarily from the fishery or contributes to the minimum number of "weeks

employed" needed to qualify for employment insurance benefits. These benefits are an important adjunct to the annual income of coastal people because of the seasonal nature of the fishery, the lack of a manufacturing industry or other forms of employment (Duhaime 1991; Szala-Meneok 1992). The cash economy of Labrador settlements is of obvious importance on the contemporary scene; however, the non-cash economy is equally vital. This is a well-developed system of mutual assistance and non-monetary barter that is built on a solid foundation of familial and friendship linkages and consists of food fishery, hunting, snaring, gathering, woodcutting and household activities (Hedley 1995; House, White and Ripley 1988; Ross and Usher 1986).

This modified foraging adaptive model is ideally suited to sub-Arctic conditions where the abundance of flora and fauna fluctuates, and no single subsistence strategy can satisfactorily support the human population. To adapt to these fluctuations, coastal people expand and contract their level of resource utilization to meet the exigencies of sub-Arctic living. Experience has taught Labradorians that dependency on only one of these strategies would be folly.

Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Craft Production in Labrador

During the 18th century, English and Scottish fishers came to the coast to pursue salmon and cod. In the early stages of the British fishery, fishermen only stayed along the coast during the summer months, and prosecuted the fishery from vessels operating off shore. Crew members went ashore periodically to draw fresh water and cut firewood, and eventually captains directed their crews to build stages (wharves) and flakes (drying platforms) for use in shore-based fish salteries. Later still, mercantile fishery operators determined that a year-long presence on the coast was required. Crew members then remained in Labrador to protect properties from plundering privateers, trap fur-bearing animals to sell in Europe, stockpile firewood and repair buildings and stages damaged by winter storms. While some men met and married women during their trips back to England or to Newfoundland, many fishers married Inuit and Innu (formerly known as Naskapi-Montagnais) women from Labrador. These Aboriginal foremothers, with their strong kin ties, their traditional environmental knowledge and their skills in crafting skin clothing and footwear played a vital role in the survival of Europeans on the Labrador coast. These women have also had a lasting imprint on the types of handcrafted items produced by Labradorian women even today.

Until quite recently, Labrador women manufactured boots and parkas from sealskin and caribou hide for all their household members (Ennis et al. 1987; Szala-Meneok 1992). At trading posts and through the fish merchants, women had access to duffel, woollen cloth, calico cotton, knitting worsted, embroidery silk, steel needles, thread, sailcloth and other textile goods. As a result,

the clothing of the region eventually reflected a distinctive syncretism of Aboriginal and European styles and materials.

The arrival of Anglican and Methodist missionaries in the region during the mid-19th century initiated recognition of the uniqueness of local handicrafts by outsiders. Missionaries had local women make their boots, parkas and other clothing to afford them protection when they made their parish rounds by dog-team throughout the winter. These missionaries often purchased other practical and decorative crafts from women for their own use or to send home to family and friends as exotic curios from the "wilds of Labrador." These early missionaries were the first "tourists" who bought crafts; they also served as informal middlemen in the marketing of handmade Labrador items outside of the region. The kinds of items selected by missionaries also gave crafts producers early insight into the aesthetics held by people from "away."

The Commercialization of Crafts

While missionaries were probably the earliest outside consumers of Labradorian crafts of various kinds, and were likely amongst the first to introduce them in the United States, Canada and Britain, there was no organized effort to transform the fruits of women's domestic skills into exchange items. It was not until the arrival of Sir Wilfred Grenfell in 1892, and the Mission to Deep Sea Fishers, that the economic potential of Labrador crafts was recognized. Grenfell was a young Anglican physician who, in addition to his medical duties, became an avid international fund-raiser, a self-proclaimed social reformer and early proponent of development schemes in Labrador. Building on his experiences with the Mission to Deep Sea Fishers, first in the North Sea communities and then in Labrador, Grenfell established the International Grenfell Association (IGA) and set his mind to the task of transforming Labrador society in terms of health care, quality of life and economic survival. From his days as a medical officer on the steamers and sailing vessels that served as hospital ships, Grenfell had concerns about the long-term impact of charitable work on its recipients. It was his view that giving free medical attention or medicine constituted a "handout," was demeaning and would thus lead to the "pauperization" of Labradorian people (Grenfell 1929). In light of this, Grenfell made it a policy that patients provide even a token payment, usually in kind, for medical services rendered and used clothing distributed by the IGA. Berries, fish, gull eggs and handcrafted goods became recognized items of exchange (O'Brien 1992). This encouraged the commodification of craft items along the coast.

Under Grenfell's charismatic direction, the IGA emerged in 1893, supported almost exclusively by donations collected by Grenfell on his fund-raising and speaking circuit in Canada, the United States and Europe. In 1906, efforts were made to establish the Industrial Department of the IGA.

> In the spring of 1905 Grenfell was lecturing in Salem, Massachusetts, and went with his hostess to visit a small sanatorium at Marblehead catering to those suffering from "nervous collapse." The institution offered various forms of occupational therapy, a concept then in its infant stage, under the direction of Jessie Luther, a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and a teacher of arts and crafts. (O'Brien 1992:55)

Rompkey notes that it was the IGA's mandate to "encourage home industries so as to bring ready cash into families suffering from the slump in the [fish] market" (1991:252). It is important to note that in addition to the "home industries" development work of the IGA, the Jubilee guilds (formerly Women's Institutes) and the Anglican Mother's Unions also laboured long and hard to increase women's skills in crafts production (Gill 1972; Green 1967; Knight and Associates 1988; Province of Newfoundland and Labrador 1976). The IGA, however, had the most profound impact on crafts production of any of these organizations.

The occupational therapy movement grew out of an effort to employ craft making as a way to help persons recuperating from physical injuries and suffering from mental disorders. Hooked mats (rugs), weaving, carving, basket work, parka making and other needle work and curios were highly regarded in this field, and were popular in post-World War I Europe, United States and the Canadian Maritimes (Becker 1993; McKay 1994). Throughout Maritime Canada, Newfoundland, New England and Appalachia, occupational therapy evolved into an early manifestation of rural development work. Under Jessie Luther's direction the industrial department of the IGA began introducing weaving, pottery, toy making and brick making in addition to traditional Labrador crafts already produced along the coast. Like her Nova Scotian counterpart, Mary Black, who was also a New England-born occupational therapist, Luther's direction in choosing colours and the designs of woven goods and rug patterns was as much informed by an aesthetic sense nurtured in fine arts classes as it was through her exposure to the tastes of Americans who were to become the purchasers of these "authentic folk crafts." Luther wrote:

> . . . it seems reasonable to suppose that mats of good workmanship, of colouring that would not clash with average household furnishings and with designs of local significance, might find a ready market: and I began to offer such designs, usually with a plain centre and border of seals, walruses, deer, rabbits, komatiks and dogs, etc., treated conventionally. (Quoted in O'Brien 1992:57)

In addition to Luther's motifs, Grenfell also set his pen to paper and created rug designs for the Industrial Department. Thus, the repetitive tasks of rug hooking and other craft labour remained the domain of local people, but the organization, the setting of standards and the creative direction came from above.

During the Depression, Grenfell craft shops opened at such upscale locations as Oxford Street in London, Madison Avenue in New York City and Lo-

cust Street in Philadelphia. Grenfell shops, with quaint names such as "Dog-Team Tea Rooms" and "Dog-Team Taverns," operated in rural Connecticut and Vermont. In New York, opera goers viewed displays of Labrador handicrafts set up in lobbies during intermission (Rompkey 1991). A large measure of the IGA's early success at promoting Labrador crafts in high society is attributed to the efforts of Lady Grenfell, the wealthy Chicago-born wife of Sir Wilfred.

Rompkey (1991) notes however that the Industrial Department of the IGA was plagued by organizational problems and often had periods when it had difficulty generating sales. The IGA also had to underwrite the crafts infrastructure located at IGA Headquarters in St. Anthony, Newfoundland, because it failed to generate the necessary capital required to continue. The IGA craft strategy epitomized the paternalistic, top-down development strategies which continue into the present.

In the late 1930s, the IGA dissolved their Industrial Department, and crafts production was de-centralized to communities along the coast. Eliminating an economic liability was a positive corporate decision for the IGA as a whole. A move away from the paternalistic influence of the IGA organization provided the potential for greater autonomy for crafts producers. However, this change also meant that producers were isolated once more and no longer had the infrastructure in place to continue crafts production, while taking on the necessary marketing skills and responsibilities. In addition, crafts producers no longer had a ready source of manufactured goods used in the production of handicrafts. They now had to purchase materials at retail prices from the Hudson's Bay Company stores along the coast or from fish merchants. They were no longer in a favoured position of buying at cost, in bulk, or having a local redistribution network to move materials among crafts producers along the coast. While producers continued to make handcrafted items to sell along the coast and at IGA gift shops in St. Anthony, the engine that helped drive crafts production in Labrador had lost its steam. When the Crown Colony of Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, the provincial government stepped in and began a long history of craft development initiatives that have experienced only limited success.

The Nature of Crafts Production Today

What Are Women Making?

What we call traditional craft items today have historically been made by women for practical use by their families. Homemade craft items such as moccasins, sealskin boots, parkas and sweaters have always been worn by Labrador families. Craft skills have been passed down through generations, and many women have learned to make crafts from their mothers, mothers-in-law or other family members and friends.

For many women who make woollen socks, toques (hats), mitts or duffel clothing for their families and friends on an "as-needed" basis, crafts have also become an important and satisfying hobby. Although there are not many private craft businesses, women continue the tradition of supplementing the household income through crafts production. Many women in Battle Harbour, Paradise River and Cartwright sell finished items to their local craft shops, which provides a direct cash contribution to their incomes. Additionally, women often make crafts as gifts rather than purchasing expensive manufactured items shipped to the coast. In turn, this enables them to provide an indirect contribution to their household incomes by conserving financial resources.

The majority of craftspeople (especially on the Labrador coast) continue to make traditional crafts, although many women are also interested in expanding their skills in the area of decorative items for use in their own homes or as gifts. Such decorative products include dolls, doilies, wreaths, flower arrangements, woodwork and cross-stitching. These items are not considered traditional, but are produced, using new skills, materials or patterns copied from hobby catalogues and magazines published in Canada and the United States.

Craft Organizations

Two significant crafts organizations were created when the rural development movement emerged in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Crafts Development Association (NLCDA) was established in 1972, and the Labrador Craft Producers Association (LCPA) in 1975. The NLCDA and the LCPA have played an active role in shaping strategies for the development of the crafts industry. These organizations emerged in response to craftspeople's need for their own organizations to lobby and promote the industry, to provide information to producers and to arrange for assistance in the form of resources, workshops, craft fairs and loans (Beaubier et al. 1991).

The NLCDA's office is located in St. John's, and its members include individual craftspeople, production groups and craft businesses. It is the main provincial representative of the crafts industry and provides training assistance, quality control, information and resources to producers. It also organizes two craft fairs a year and operates a craft centre and gallery in St. John's on the island portion of the province.

Until its closure in 1995, the LCPA worked to gain recognition for the highly skilled craftspeople and to preserve traditional crafts in Labrador (NLCDA 1995). The LCPA also provided support in helping Labrador craftspeople to make and sell their work. As the umbrella organization for the many community craft shops/councils of Labrador, the LCPA offered a number of services to its members, including travelling workshops, exhibitions

and craft-related information. Before its closure, the LCPA was criticized for its passivity and failure to take a leadership role in promoting and developing the crafts industry (Knight and Associates, 1988). The LCPA's failure to act as an effective link between and among the many isolated crafts producers and councils across Labrador meant that many of them began to drift apart, not only from their organizational base but also from each other.

A third group working toward the development of the crafts industry is the Craft Development Division (part of the provincial Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation) which operates primarily as a resource group for craftspeople across the province. In Labrador, the Crafts Development Specialists organize arts and crafts exhibitions and work with individual producers in helping them to find raw materials, promote their products and access markets (Crafts Development Specialist, personal communication, 1996). A newsletter keeps craftspeople informed about the industry, markets, fairs, exhibits, etc.

Women's Involvement in Crafts Production

The majority of women who make crafts on the South Labrador coast work individually at home in their spare time. When walking into homes along the coast, we often observed needlework or mat-hooking projects on the kitchen table or the daybed ready to be picked up during a momentary lull in the daily rhythm of women's work. In Paradise River, for example, it was a common sight to see a woman standing by the window, watching her children playing along the river bank while knitting a mitt or sock without looking down at her work. One research participant commented that she found knitting relaxing and, since she had been knitting for so many years, it seemed odd when she did not have a set of needles in her hands.

Many women are also involved in their community craft councils as members or as producers who sell to local craft shops (Knight and Associates, 1988). Furthermore, Labrador College and the Regional Development Associations offer crafts workshops which women attend. Although their efforts are not focussed exclusively on Labrador, the NLCDA and the provincial Crafts Development Division provide services and information province-wide. Since the closing of the LCPA in 1995, however, Labrador craftspeople have been without an organizational body that represents or supports their specific and unique needs. In general, however, the commercial production of crafts has remained within the context of home-based, relatively small operations where women continue to produce items used by members of their household or their families or presented as gifts.

In a similar vein, Leonard's (1994) work with women crafts producers in Northern Ireland and Lever's (1988) in rural Spain point to the importance not only of the income-generating aspects of home-based crafts production, but

also of the pressures to maintain the informal, traditional and flexible nature of home-based work and the informal interactions between producers and their co-villagers. Labradorian women, like home-based crafts producers elsewhere, face the demands of integrating their ongoing domestic and child care duties with the production of valuable, family-consumed and cash-generating items (Singh and Kelles-Viitanen 1987). Women crafts producers in Labrador are faced with similar conflicts as are women throughout the developing world. They must negotiate a new sense of their femininity (Langellier 1990) and determine how they will fit into their local communities (Cone 1995) if they choose to diverge from more traditional patterns of using crafts to supplement their domestic work. In an egalitarian society such as coastal Labrador, there are many cultural and social barriers that condition women's experiences and often prevent them from undertaking activities outside the domestic sphere for which they have been traditionally responsible. There is limited support for individuals or groups of women who may wish to undertake a business initiative, particularly within a traditionally female area such as crafts production (McIntosh 1996).

Barriers to the Development of the Crafts Industry

The development of the crafts industry has been an important part of provincial strategies for tourist and rural economic development. The crafts industry in Newfoundland, with support from organizations such as the NLCDA and the Crafts Development Division of the Provincial Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, and the now-defunct LCPA, has enabled some women to become self-employed and has led to the establishment of many small craft businesses. It is estimated that the crafts industry now contributes $15 million annually to the provincial economy (Craft Development Division 1995). However, it is important to note that the majority of this contribution comes from the island portion of the province.

What is not clear, however, is the extent to which the crafts development strategy is meant to be part of a larger rural development strategy employed by the provincial government in the face of economic change since the decline and closure of the cod fishery. The social and economic structure of rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador is changing as people continue to struggle, eking out a living often in the context of economic and financial crisis. Crafts production and sales do offer an important opportunity for many rural people, mostly women, to contribute to their household incomes. However, for the craftspeople of coastal Labrador, there are a number of factors which inhibit increased participation in the crafts industry.

Over the years, crafts producers and their organizations have identified a number of significant areas which require greater attention in the further development of the industry (Beaubier et al. 1991; Knight and Associates 1988).

Through our research, we have also identified some significant barriers to the development of the crafts industry as an important economic enterprise in coastal Labrador.

Industry Barriers

(1) Raw Materials

The availability of raw materials has always been one of the biggest problems within the crafts industry in Southern Labrador. Due to cash flow problems and inadequate storage facilities, it is difficult to order larger quantities (i.e., bulk) and a variety of raw materials (Knight and Associates 1988). As a result, it is extremely expensive and inconvenient for producers or craft councils to stock good-quality materials necessary for the production of crafts.

(2) Marketing

For the majority of crafts producers on the Labrador coast, finding markets for their products is and always has been a central stumbling block. Organizations such as the IGA and the Women's Institutes once played a pivotal role in directing crafts production as well as selling raw materials to and buying finished crafts from producers across the province. However, their direction and control over crafts production helped to discourage independent initiatives within the industry, and many producers became dependent on these few organizations for product design, materials and the developing of networks for marketing and sales (Beaubier et al. 1991). Without this organizational direction, many individual producers lack the marketing skills required to fully participate in the business of crafts production.

The Crafts Five Year Strategy Committee (Beaubier et al. 1991) suggests that the marketing structure for crafts has become more diverse since the 1960s with the establishment of craft fairs and the emergence of craft shops and councils in many small communities across the province. However, many crafts producers remain isolated today in terms of marketing and sales networks. Despite some financial support that is available for producers who live and work in remote communities, craft fairs and external networks continue to be inaccessible to many producers. Furthermore, those marketing networks that do exist tend to benefit island producers and only a small fraction of those in Labrador. They tend to exclude Labrador craftspeople living in smaller and more isolated communities with the result that they cannot learn first hand from the experiences of successful craft marketers.

In rural or outport communities that continue to depend on the extraction of natural resources and are therefore governed by seasonal working patterns, crafts activities do not always coincide with regular crafts industry marketing schedules (Beaubier et al. 1991). For example, the many crafts producers who may be employed or otherwise busy during the critically important summer

fishing months may find it impossible to produce and ship their crafts in time for the peak merchandising during the Christmas holidays. As a result, Labrador crafts producers maximize the autumn months following the hectic salmon and crab fishing seasons to prepare for this peak craft sale period. Crafts are made and sold in this period, but a large percentage of that market is situated on the coast. In this way, crafts bring fresh capital into households, but because of the localized market—Labradorians selling to other Labradorians—crafts producers do not have access to fresh capital from outside the region. Because producers of handicrafts rarely acquire experience with pricing in a competitive marketplace outside of the coast, realistic costing principles are not understood or implemented. In one instance, one of the researchers asked a local craftswoman to make her a parka. Although the craftswoman was entirely capable of working out the design, embroidery motif, colour and measurement of the parka, she was not only incapable of, but extraordinarily uncomfortable with, setting a firm price for her craft. When asked what she would charge for the parka, she asked, "What do you think you could pay for it?" Similarly, attempts by co-ops and other groups to market Labrador crafts outside of the region are often criticized because setting wholesale prices and establishing preferred customer rates are marketing procedures with which the individual producer has no experience. Price setting often becomes a contentious issue for members of craft groups, and in some instances this lack of business knowledge leads to serious fractures in craft organizations. Such disruptive issues could be remedied by more comprehensive training in small-business skills.

(3) Training

Training programs and workshops generally focus on developing new and enhancing traditional crafts skills (Kelsey 1993; Rural Development Co-operation Agreement 1991). Recent workshops, for example, have concentrated on making moccasins, parkas and dried flower arrangements. Training programs offer people opportunities to develop new skills in making crafts, but many producers are already highly skilled, and their attendance may instead be motivated by curiosity or the social aspects of the workshops themselves. Moreover, training opportunities tend to be based in Newfoundland, which means that the participation of Labrador producers is more sporadic. Access to programs offered in the larger centres is often difficult due to time, expense and transportation logistics.

Producers have consistently indicated that they need training in marketing and the running of small businesses. The training programs that do exist tend to concentrate on skills development, but there is limited training specific to the business side of crafts production. A sincere effort on the part of craft development workers to provide small business skills could enhance the poten-

tial for crafts businesses to succeed. Furthermore, these are transferable skills and are therefore valuable to any entrepreneurial venture along the coast. Once trained through crafts development programs, women could train other women and men in starting small businesses in their communities. Despite the various philanthropic and provincially directed efforts to develop crafts production as a viable economic opportunity over the last 60 years, development programs have not focussed on improving small-business skills and have therefore failed to meet the identified needs of crafts producers.

In the early 1990s, the Crafts Five Year Strategy Committee was established to identify major development needs and to develop a series of long-term planning objectives for the crafts industry (Beaubier et al. 1991).

In their report, the Crafts Five Year Strategy Committee (Beaubier et al. 1991) determined that there was a reluctance on the part of craftspeople to access design training programs due to a lack of understanding about the necessity for developing new, marketable designs. There seems to be a fundamental lack of awareness of the potential market value of innovative craft items. This reluctance to develop new designs, however, may be fuelled by the producers' own views about the authenticity of their craft items and the place that traditional crafts have in their maintenance of a distinctive Labradorian identity. The marketing of new crafts can be viewed as a move into an even more risky business domain, because many crafts groups have already experienced some problems with trying to successfully market traditional crafts.

(4) Product Development and Design

The most significant barrier to product development and design in the crafts industry is the lack of communication among Labrador crafts producers and organizations and their lack of contact with outside purchasers and other craftspeople. In the report of the Crafts Five Year Strategy Committee (Beaubier et al. 1991) it is suggested that the isolation of rural communities provides a significant barrier for craftspeople because they do not have ready access to other new craft designs, innovations or producers. In particular, high travel costs and a weak communications network inhibit crafts producers' exposure to market opportunities, trends, new business technologies and raw material suppliers.

In the past, travelling workshops organized by the LCPA taught craft techniques, which originated in various parts of Labrador, to craft council members along the coast with the aim of increasing production and sales (Kennedy 1995). This became problematic, however, as many producers themselves began to question the authenticity of these Labrador crafts. Kennedy (1995) points to the introduction of Inuit grass-work baskets that originally came from areas along the north coast to southern communities such as Mary's Harbour. By attempting to increase production and sales, the dissemination of

traditional motifs and materials threatens the artistic integrity, genuine quality and local value of many craft items (Kennedy 1995).

(5) Organization and Communication

Beyond the organizational and communication problems that stem from the geographical isolation of the many communities between Sandwich Bay and Mary's Harbour, there is also a profound lack of organizational support for the crafts industry. The closure of the LCPA has left Labrador craftspeople without an organizational body, and has helped to further isolate them by inhibiting their exposure to marketing networks, training programs, industry information and trends.

There also seems to be a mismatch of perceived needs and interests by other provincial craft development organizations who shape and direct the crafts industry from above. There is a tendency for these organizations to concentrate on their role in the delivery and enhancement of services that encourage crafts production. However, in order more effectively to meet the needs of Labrador craftspeople, craft organizations need to develop a clear and appropriate understanding of how Labrador communities operate and the ways in which crafts fit into the adaptive economic and social strategies employed by community members.

(6) Social and Cultural Barriers

The nature of the modified foraging subsistence pattern depends primarily on individuals, dyads or triads that expand and contract to complete fishing, hunting, trapping or gathering activities. As a consequence, coastal Labradorians do not have existing social organizational models that easily transfer to the operation of large-group, co-operative ventures such as craft businesses.

In Labrador, the first line of defence for economic survival has historically been the use of foraged resources for individual and family use. The second line of defence is the use of these foraged resources in exchange for cash or kind or wage labour in other resource-related industries (i.e., fish-processing plants, sawmills, etc.). Since 1957, the social welfare system has provided a third line of defence in times of economic hardship such as the current closure of the cod fishery. And finally, fourth-line strategies such as crafts production help to meet the exigencies of coastal Labradorian life. Our experience in Labrador and the literature on the history of crafts production reports that craft producers expand and contract their involvement in crafts production when other lines of defence fail or decline (Knight and Associates 1988; NLCDA 1995; Province of Newfoundland and Labrador 1976; Rompkey 1991).

The complementary nature of women's and men's work in this largely subsistence-based economy is built upon a long tradition of meeting household needs conservatively. Labradorians live in a highly contingent world where

severe weather conditions and fluctuations in the abundance of fished, hunted and trapped species are common. These risks are generally experienced by the community at large.

Entrepreneurs, however, are defined as *individuals* "who are willing to take risks and break with traditional practices in order to make a profit" (Bates and Plog 1991:175). Like other people who live in small-scale societies, Labradorians deal with economic risk-taking not in the relative anonymity of the "big city," but on the intimate stage of the village. In the village, the very act of innovation can and is often interpreted as a value judgment about accepted or traditional ways of doing things. Nay saying and general pessimism are part of a conservative outlook cast upon new community or individual economic development ventures, especially if they are undertaken by women.

Motivations for such pessimistic pronouncements may be based on a history of failure of past efforts, traditional gender roles and hostility directed toward any person who may be perceived as gaining advantage over others. Regardless of the motivations which underlie "nay saying," it ultimately serves to dampen rather than foster enthusiasm for entrepreneurial activity and serves to hobble innovation. This continues to occur, even though many "nay sayers" will argue quite passionately that "something has to be done" about the depressed economic conditions on the coast. This paradox contributes to the often fatalistic reception that development workers receive when they attempt to drum up enthusiasm for a new project. After walking home from a development meeting where "nay saying" was served up in healthy portions, one frustrated woman observed, "Well, we wouldn't want to try anything different now, would we?"

In another community, a woman decided to start a small shop attached to her house in order to sell a few groceries, local crafts and paintings. The planned enterprise was met with statements such as, "Oh that won't go, everybody always goes to Uncle X's shop for what they need" or "Who'll get off the coastal boat to buy her things anyway?"

In terms of barriers facing women entrepreneurs in particular, McIntosh (1996) relates that south-coast Labrador women face a number of significant social, cultural and psychological obstacles that often prevent them from becoming more involved in the economic development of their communities. Traditional gender attitudes and stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women within the home make it extremely difficult for many women to devote much time and energy to crafts production beyond family and household needs. In her comments about why women are not more involved in their communities or in business, one research participant commented that there is "a fear of exclusion if women break traditional roles. . . . [W]omen are reluctant to go outside their role because their husband wants her around and treats it almost like desertion if she chooses to go out or to get involved in the eve-

nings . . ." (Darleen, in McIntosh 1996:12). There is a profound lack of support and encouragement among community members and women themselves for women who attempt to transform their crafts activities from what might be considered a "hobby" into a full-fledged business enterprise. For women who live in these small communities, there are high risks associated with succeeding beyond the egalitarian standards that are set and regulated by members of the community through gossip and criticism (Davis 1988; McIntosh 1996; Schneider 1984).

Low levels of self-confidence and esteem, feelings of isolation and a lack of role models in areas of business and economic development are formidable obstacles. In addition, the history of the Labrador coast is punctuated by the economic failures of both local people and outsiders with vast capital and business experience. The stories of fish merchants who lost their fortunes over the course of a single fishing season form a litany that is recited again and again (Szala-Meneok 1992). The dismal record of entrepreneurial enterprises on the coast serve as cautionary tales, and, for both women and men, there is a great reluctance to enter into unproven economic and business ventures (Schneider 1984).

These barriers reflect the social realities of women's lives and serve to reinforce and perpetuate each other, making it difficult for women to wholly embrace crafts production as a viable business strategy. As in the case of the modified foraging subsistence strategy, the risk of failure is minimized by diversifying subsistence activities. Dependency on a single economic venture ties up already scarce capital and increases the level of exposure.

(7) Economic Barriers and the Social Welfare State

Current economic and social support programs such as Employment Insurance (EI) benefits and The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS—the federal compensation package offered to displaced fishery workers) discourage self-employment initiatives and have served to decrease people's self-confidence and undermine the work ethic.

This makes it extremely difficult for people, particularly women, to tie up scarce resources (i.e., time and money) in crafts businesses or co-operatives because they risk losing the security of Employment Insurance and/or TAGS eligibility if their business ventures fail. Women are aware that this potential is real because they have already recognized that they lack the small-business skills that would make such endeavours succeed. This caution is born of the life experiences of a people who have learned that, in order to survive, they need to pursue a multiplicity of subsistence and income strategies.

Conclusions

In coastal Labrador, people have witnessed extreme fluctuations in their fishery over time. Since the moratorium on the groundfish species in 1992, many women and men are still reluctant to relinquish a way of life which is rooted in generations of experience. For the many people who are still in a state of disbelief, it is difficult to absorb the enormity of this crisis and to cope with the impending changes which will radically transform their way of life.

To take the crafts industry beyond its current level of development would require major shifts in how people perceive the importance of women's household contributions, the economic potential for business ventures in general and for craft operations in particular. On the Labrador coast, crafts have always been viewed as a supplement to subsistence activities and/or wage labour, and there is little confidence that reliance on crafts production can provide a secure livelihood.

Development efforts aimed at promoting the crafts industry should consider the myriad, long-standing adaptive strategies employed by coastal people. For generations, these strategies have been critical to the survival of people in this sub-Arctic region. Pursuing a variety of activities helps to mitigate the risks associated with dependency on a single industry or subsistence strategy in order to survive.

Development efforts must also take into consideration the real and expressed needs of crafts producers in terms of skills and business training. Initiatives of the various crafts organizations and development programs reflect a mind-set that assumes that entrepreneurs in Labrador will follow similar paths to their counterparts in more urban settings. In order to deliver more appropriate and therefore effective crafts development programs, ideas about entrepreneurial behaviour need to be re-cast within the context and realities of small-scale societies. By focussing on the realities of well-established subsistence activities and the social and cultural constraints which inhibit economic risk taking, crafts development programming can align more closely with the requirements of life along the Labrador coast. Without appropriate and effective training in all these aspects of crafts production and development, Labrador crafts producers will continue to lack the necessary skills for participating in the economic development of their communities through crafts. In order to harness the full potential that crafts production offers, some change must occur within Labradorian notions of community development and entrepreneurial activity as well.

Crafts production is but one of a constellation of adaptive responses that Labradorians, particularly women, can employ to contribute to the economic well-being and recovery of the region. Despite the barriers that inhibit the emergence of a large-scale crafts industry, Labradorians will continue to pursue crafts production as an important strategy for meeting the challenges of an uncertain future.

Note

1. This article has taken shape through our separate field research experiences in this region. Karen Szala-Meneok has conducted anthropological field research along the middle coast in the vicinity of Groswater and Sandwich Bays since 1976. Funding for this research was generously provided by the President's Committee on Northern Research, McMaster University, the Arctic Institute of North America and the Sigma Xi Research Foundation. Kara McIntosh has worked along the south coast in the Battle Harbour Region in 1995, focussing on issues of gender and rural development initiatives. Funds for this research were provided by The University School of Rural Planning and Development, University of Guelph. The final version of this article benefited from the careful readings of *Anthropologica*'s anonymous reviewers and from Patricia Colton, although the authors take full responsibility for its contents.

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GENDER CONSTRUCTION AND DIVERSITY IN ICELANDIC FISHING COMMUNITIES

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Abstract: This article combines an analysis of the social construction of gender inequality with an examination of the construction of other kinds of diversity among women in small fishing villages in Iceland. This combination is necessary in order to avoid the creation of a static categorization of women in the fisheries. The construction of commonalities and diversities among women and between women and men is examined. Gender and diversity are generated locally, and in relation to the larger world. Women have a common identity as inhabitants of small fishing villages, an important identity they share with men to some extent. However, among them there are important dissimilarities based on many factors, including, for example, the different relations to the fisheries experienced by fishermen's wives and fish processors.

Résumé: Cet article associe une analyse de l'interprétation sociale de l'inégalité des sexes à un examen de différents types de diversité parmi les femmes dans les petits villages de pêcheurs islandais. Cette association est nécessaire afin d'éviter la création d'une catégorisation statique figée chez les femmes dans les pêcheries. Nous avons examiné l'interprétation des élements communs et celle des élements différents parmi les femmes tout d'abord et ensuite entre les femmes et les hommes. L'inégalité sexuelle et la diversité sont créés localement mais en relation avec le reste du monde. Les femmes ont une identité commune en tant qu'habitantes des petits villages de pêcheurs, une identité importante qu'elles partagent dans une certaine mesure avec les hommes. Cependant, parmi elles, il existe d'importantes dissemblances basées sur de nombreux facteurs, incluant, par exemple les différentes relations existant dans les pêcheries telles que vécues par les femmes de pêcheurs et par les ouvriers des pêcheries.

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The Social Construction of Diversities and Commonalities

Multivocality, multiple identities and diversity within given areas are common themes in anthropology and gender studies at the present. The picturing of culture as a bounded unit has been seriously put to the test. In studies of gender construction the emphasis is no longer only on the differences between women and men but also on diversity among women. Henrietta Moore has pointed out that this emphasis on the variance among women has "occurred simultaneously with and been a part of a movement towards a post-modernist trend along with a focus on multi-culturalism and new questions regarding the concept of culture" (Moore 1993:194). In gender studies the focus on diversity is in part a reaction to an earlier essentialism found among those anthropologists who attempted to find universalistic explanations for the inequalities between women and men. Today many who theorize about gender relations assume that there is no single cause for the different positions of men and women in society.

Nationality, class, sexual preference, ethnicity, age and residence (rural vs. urban) are often intertwined in the discussion of diversity among women. Multiple identities have been seen as formed by these various factors and as intersecting within individuals. A few questions must be raised with regard to the diversity among women and the differences in the social construction of maleness and femaleness. How important is gender, compared with these other factors, in forming people's identities and in defining their position in society? Does a focus on diversity mean that there is no common ground for political organizing among women? How far can we go in our focus on diversity before becoming such relativists that we begin to justify inequalities and political apathy?

There is no simple solution to the question, "Where should we draw the line between universalism and relativism when we are dealing with power differences based on gender in particular localities?" However, too much of an emphasis on culturally constructed differences can lead to a new reification of these differences which may then be communicated in static terms, such as those based on class, religion or ethnicity. As Pratt and Hanson (1994:6) have pointed out, "There is a very real danger that old systems of closure may simply be shifted on to a new set of categories." Thus we find today new, static categories of Islamic women, lesbian women, single mothers, etc. This kind of reification can to a certain extent be seen in studies of women in fishing communities in the North Atlantic. Since the focus has primarily been on the commonalities among them as fishermen's wives and fish processors, and on their potential power, the diversities between the various North Atlantic fishing societies, as well as within fishing communities, have largely been ignored.

An attempt has been made in the last decades by those who have studied fishing communities to correct the former stereotypes of women in the

fisheries, make such women visible and give a more realistic view of their social and economic contributions as well as examining their position. Nadel-Klein and Davis in their edited volume on women in the fisheries warned against the tendency to overemphasize the similarities found in women's lives in fishing communities. They wanted to show "that to understand fishing communities and economies, the adaptive challenges of fishing must be placed within the specific context of history, political economy and gender ideology" (1988:6). Focussing on the differences among women, such as those between women in fishing communities and others, may under certain circumstances be useful but it may also draw our attention away from the commonalities that exist among them—commonalities which are not natural or universal but socially constructed. Commonalities are important to take into account, because gender, along with ethnicity and age, continues to play an important role as social categories defining and delimiting people's position in today's world. Gender remains a fundamental aspect of social relations of power. As Scott has pointed out, "Gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power" (1988:42). A focus on diversity among women without an analysis of the social construction of gender inequalities can therefore draw our attention away from the many ways in which gender-based inequalities are maintained. It is necessary to counter the tendency that can be seen in postmodernist discussions of diversity to take difference as a starting point instead of seeing it as an end product (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:16). Diversities and similarities are created by the same social processes and can therefore only to a limited extent be analyzed separately. Thus to avoid the creation of new static categories of women one can examine the processes through which differences as well as similarities are socially and historically created, both locally and in relation to the larger world. One way to do this is to examine the process of differentiation and identity construction in a particular place. Then it is possible to examine how the different social groups are structured relationally. The relations between them can be characterized by conflicting interests as well as by common interests. Moreover, power differences play a role in this process, although they are not necessarily conceived of as such because they are mostly maintained not by force but are integral aspects of daily life and dominant discourses. In my study of women in Icelandic fishing communities I examine how differences and similarities among women, and between women and men, are created in relation to domestic life, work experiences within the community and the larger world outside the village. I consider work-based identities and those based on location as parts of a social process, not as static signs. As Pratt and Hanson have suggested,

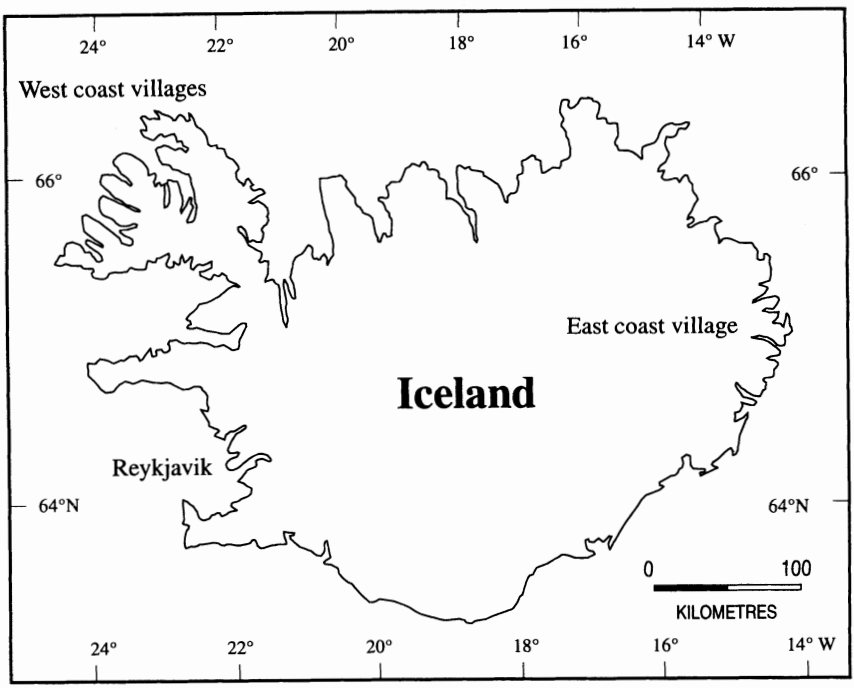
> Studying identities in particular places can help counteract the current tendency within feminism to rigidify the differences among women and can be an important means of rebuilding affinities among women. A close ethnographic study uncovers interdependencies and connections. By studying lives in context one can probe similarities as well as differences. (1994:26)

How can we approach diversity in small and geographically isolated communities, such as the fishing communities in Iceland, which most commonly have about 1000 inhabitants? We can, for example, examine what women as members of fishing communities have in common which distinguishes them from women in the city or women in rural areas. We can also examine differences generated locally, such as those based on class, age, marital status, nationality, participation in the labour market and different relations to the fisheries as fishermen's wives and fish processors. Gendered identity can also depend on the context, e.g., marital relations, sibling relations or workplace interaction. This kind of examination will help avoid creating new stereotypes of women in fishing communities to replace earlier ones. We will thus contribute to producing a more realistic picture of women's lives. For this, however, we also need to examine how gender inequalities are maintained.

The Research Setting

Fish constitutes the largest export in the Icelandic economy and the country's most valuable resource, accounting for about 80 percent of the export commodities and about 50 percent of the total export earnings. The fishery plays not only an important economic role, but also figures significantly in the national identity of Icelanders. Icelanders see themselves to a large degree as a proud fishing nation. The fishery is, however, not the biggest industry in Iceland and only about 10 percent of the population is directly involved in the fisheries. The number of people directly involved in the fisheries has never exceeded 15 percent of the economically active population, and less than 20 percent of the population live in communities that can be defined as fishing communities (Skaptadóttir 1995). The relative importance of the fishing industry varies greatly from one area to the other. It is much more important in the northwest peninsula than in the southwest part (Árnason 1992:31). In areas such as the northwest peninsula (the West Fjords) and the east coast, areas where field research was conducted for this study, fishing and fishery-related activities are crucial for continuity of employment and habitation. The study presented here is based on field research in three small fishing communities in Iceland in the years 1989, 1990 and 1996. Two of the villages are in the northwest part of Iceland, called the West Fjords, and one of the villages is in the eastern part of Iceland. Two of these villages have a little over 1000 inhabitants each and one of the villages in the West Fjords has only about 400 inhabitants.

Figure 1
Geographical Locations of the Villages in the Study



Fishing villages in Iceland are for the most part geographically very isolated and relatively inaccessible. They are commonly located in fjords with very little lowland, having come into being when proximity to good fishing grounds was much more important than it is today. Villages began to form where there had been seasonal sites or merchants' hamlets at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. In these villages women have always made an important contribution to the fisheries, but their work has been seen as less valuable than men's work. Their participation has been, and continues to be, in processing the catch, baiting and in preparing men for fishing. Before the freezing plants were established, they were seasonally involved in the processing of salted fish. Today their work in the processing plants is no longer seasonal, and the plants themselves are clean, high-technology factories.

Most fishing villages in Iceland developed as one-company villages where a single dominant company owned the main processing plant as well as some fishing vessels which provided fish for the plant. Some of these companies were individually owned, others were owned by the community or with municipal participation, and all have to a different degree been run with some

support from the state (mostly in the form of loans from investment funds). Since the 1930s official regional policies have been concerned with maintaining employment in villages and small towns. Numerous measures were taken, such as improvement of local social services, especially in health care, education, the construction of roads and bridges and assistance in building new harbours. Recently there have been many indications of diminishing national support for regional development in Iceland. Small villages have increasingly come to be seen as uneconomical, and political sentiments have shifted toward market-oriented policies. The clearest indication of the dominance of a market mentality is the present fishing policy, the implementation of an ITQ (individually transferable quota) system. With the ITQ system, fishing stocks have, in effect, been turned into the private property of boat owners, who can then sell and lease out their quota unhindered (Pálsson and Helgason 1996).

Even though fish is acknowledged to be the most important resource for Icelanders in the dominant discourse, and Icelanders pride themselves on being a proud fishing nation, Icelandic fishing communities are often described as cultureless entities. Inhabitants of fishing communities have been stigmatized, as in many other societies where the fishing plays a less central role than in Iceland (Cole 1991; Löfgren 1979; Nadel-Klein 1991). Fisher folk are considered to be hard working and a bit on the rough side. Men go out on the dangerous ocean to bring wealth to the nation, and independent women wait for them on shore (Skaptadóttir 1995). In spite of geographical isolation, these villages are neither culturally nor economically isolated. They have, like many other northern areas, been tied into an international economy since the turn of the last century when fishing villages began to form. Fish products are produced for a global market in high-technology freezing plants which are usually within walking distance from the homes of the workers. Villagers are consumers of mass-produced products from all over the world. They use these products to build and furnish their own homes, making them part of their identities and culture. In Iceland there is now a great fear of losing the "national identity," fear that the global English-speaking culture will engulf and absorb the fragile national culture and language. This fear is, for example, clearly represented by numerous television and radio broadcasts which dwell on different aspects of this perceived problem. A related fear of the loss of local culture in particular regions such as the northwest coast can be seen linked to a fear of future depopulation. The fear exists that global market forces or new European standards in production will drive locally based industries out of existence. Due to economic problems many people have been moving away to larger towns and in particular to the southwest corner around the capital area. Those who feel they have been unfairly penalized by the present fishing policy (the quota system) are particularly worried.

Women: Common Local Identities

Life in the fishing villages is very localized. Home, work, shops, friends and family are close by, and people's daily lives are interwoven. Most of the people work in the few workplaces that exist in the villages, such as the fish plant, the grocery store, the car repair shop or the bank. Although these workplaces are close enough to the homes for people to walk to work, the car is commonly used to go from one place to another within a village. The villagers meet each other at the one or two grocery stores or at the video rental shop, they go to the swimming pool and sauna, send their children to the same daycare and school and their sons play on the same soccer team. As the villages are geographically isolated from one another, services have to be provided locally. However, with better cars, better roads and the construction of tunnels it is becoming more common to seek services in larger towns during summer months. The inhabitants participate in local choirs, women's associations and rescue teams. Moreover, although most people work long hours, short social visits among friends and relatives are important parts of daily life in the villages. Many women also participate in monthly sewing circles with friends and relatives. In the summer villagers prepare the Fishermen's Day and other communal celebrations. In recent years a "new tradition" is coming into being in many of the small villages around the island. A celebration is held on a summer weekend with returned migrants, most of whom have moved to the southwest part of the country around Reykjavík (the capital). For this celebration, old pictures of the villages are displayed and historic walking tours and other entertainment are organized. People in the fishing communities studied commonly emphasize the particularity of their local culture (although they did not use the concept of "culture" but would rather talk about way of life), which they see as distinct but, at the same time, as an important part of Icelandic national identity and culture. They emphasize aspects from their local history which are important for their identity. That the village itself is an important unit can be seen by the aerial photographs of the home village and paintings of local landscape to be found in most homes and institutions.

Many women emphasize their common interests as women of fishing communities independent of their particular connections with the fishery itself. Some of them may work in a freezing plant, some may be married to truck drivers, some may work in the local store or be married to fishermen, but they all have a common identity as members of the village. This identity deemphasizes the diversities found among them, such as those based on age, class and occupation. Moreover they may, in this regard, perceive themselves to have interests in common with men. These identities are seen as related to the welfare and continued existence of their communities, which in turn contribute to the well-being of the fisheries as a whole. The welfare of their families depends on the fisheries, fishing itself, work in fish processing and other

activities related to the fisheries, such as net making and fish-oil processing. The common identity as members of a community is often expressed in relation to the fisheries. Ólöf, a young single woman who works in fish processing, explained: "We all follow day by day where the trawlers are and what they are getting, even when you are not working in fish at that particular time you ask about them. It is as if one has become part of it all." Where the different ships and boats are and how much fish they are getting is a popular topic of conversation in all the villages of this study. Locally based identity is also expressed by emphasizing the cohesiveness of villagers. That the community was one family, where everyone was taken care of, was often said to be the main advantage of living in a small village. As one middle-aged woman said: "You see, this here, such a small community, it is like one family. If something happens to you or if you have problems then you can always ask for help from your neighbours." Another woman, a mother of two children aged nine and four, also emphasized the close-knit nature of the village and added: "You can put your children out in the morning and take them in at night, I mean you wouldn't do that in Reykjavík. If you need to go to the store or to the doctor, you just tell your neighbours. If your children disappear, everyone knows who they are and can take them back home." At the same time the inhabitants of each village also discussed the importance of the impression the village community made on outsiders, both foreign tourists and, more importantly, members of the surrounding communities. Erla, a 35-year-old woman, talks about how improved roads have led to increased inter-village travel.

> They have begun to come here and they go to the swimming pool and they see that we are not lousy. And I also think that the people who live here are very ambitious, everyone is ready to do their best, and working hard on their houses and yards. And I am happy when other people come here and see this and we get compliments, and people come here and see how really good everything looks.

Similar expressions of being proud of the village and the surrounding landscape often came up in interviews and informal conversations with the people in this study.

If we consider the identities of fish-plant workers we can sometimes see the same emphasis on common interests. Women's work as fish processors in the freezing plants is looked down upon in Iceland. It is seen as boring work that requires no special skills. Even though women are aware of this, they take pride in their work in fish processing, in being part of the most important economic activity in the national economy. They are very much aware of the fact that the fishery is not peripheral to the economy as in many other countries in the North Atlantic. It is central to any discussion of the Icelandic economic situation and a part of the modern national identity. They see the work they do as a major aspect of the entire fishing industry, as Anna explained in an interview

about her work in the fisheries: "There is no shame working in a freezing plant. It is more honourable working in fish processing than merely working in an office, because you are providing for the whole nation." Moreover, and maybe more importantly, women in the fish plant do not see their identity solely as fish processors. There is not a very clear line between their identities as fish processors and as members of fishing communities and families or households which include husbands, brothers or sons who are fishermen. A stronger difference is perceived between "us," the fisher-folk who produce the wealth on which society builds, and "them," the city dwellers who spend the wealth. The latter see fishing villages as a burden, but depend on them without realizing it.

This strong sense of common local identity has inspired women in several fishing communities on the northwest coast, who have recently been searching for new employment opportunities, to start handicraft centres. In their production of handmade things to be sold to Icelandic and foreign tourists during the summer months, they prefer to use local material and patterns. The women knit wool sweaters and mittens, make dolls, handbags and jewellery, work with clay, make baskets and do wood carving among other things. In their marketing strategy they emphasize their particular, locally based culture in contrast to the rest of the world. They are participating both in the global economy and, at the same time, in the process of localization (Friedman 1994). They have, for example, rediscovered old knitting patterns which they claim are authentic for the West Fjords and they make jewellery from fish skin. In this way they participate in the making and remaking of local culture, using natural materials and emphasizing the closeness of fishing communities to the resources of nature. One such worker is Inga, a fisherman's wife, who carves figures in driftwood which is found locally. When I asked her how she got involved with the craft centre, she said: "It had to do with work. I needed something to do, because I have had insecure jobs and have been in so many workplaces. Then I began to think if I could make something on my own. That the resource was not necessarily elsewhere, but maybe here at home. That is how I began to think." In spite of the emphasis on local rootedness, not all of the women make crafts which are necessarily Icelandic or from the area. Some make clothes and furniture for Barbie dolls, paint on bed sheets with Walt Disney figures copied from colouring books, cross-stitch pictures from magazines or patchwork wall hangings and blankets influenced by American country-living magazines. In the designing of patchwork quilts one however often finds themes depicted which relate to the fishery, such as fish or boats. It is important, they say, to have such things for the locals to buy as gifts or to use in their own homes.

Diversities among Women in Icelandic Fishing Communities

When I first did research in two fishing villages in Iceland (1989-90), I found different views regarding the past and present among women who were involved with the fisheries. I found diversities among them based on such things as marital status, age, occupation and class. I asked the older women to describe to me their life in a fishing village early in this century when they were young women. Listening to their descriptions I found that, although at first sight they seemed to belong to a homogeneous group of poor people attempting to make a living by the seaside, their lives were in fact diverse. Among them there were servant women who lived in other people's homes (some of whom never married); married women with children who worked for others, cleaning and doing laundry; women married and unmarried who worked as day labourers on the pier, washing and drying the salt fish for the merchant. In each village there was usually one dominant merchant who provided the fishermen with supplies and to whom the local fishers were obliged to sell their fish, an arrangement similar to that historically found in Newfoundland (Sider 1986). Then there were the fishermen's wives who worked in their own homes, often managing the work of women servants. These women prepared their husbands (and sometimes seasonal fishermen) for fishing and were involved in baiting or other aspects of the fishery, depending on the size of the households. These households had more control over their production process as they sold already-processed salt fish to the merchant. This was at the time when the formation of fishing villages was beginning in Iceland and thus many of these women had moved from farming areas to coastal settlements. I found that these migrations had a different meaning for these women depending both on their contemporary social position and their former position in the farming society. Widows, for example, had more prospects of keeping their homes and their children with them in the village when there were opportunities for wage work both for them and their children (Gunnlaugsson and Garðarsdóttir 1996; Skaptadóttir 1995).

Then, as today, it was hard to delineate a single profile of women in a fishing village. Women are not only fishermen's wives or fish processors. Some are both fishermen's wives and fish processors; others are neither. Although the greatest number of women work in the fishery, there are also other jobs for women such as working in day care, in shops or cleaning offices or other workplaces. Others are housewives married to local men who are not fishermen. Among all of these women we find class-based differences and those based on age and marital status. Then there is a difference based on national origin, a difference that remains to be studied in Icelandic fishing communities. In almost every fishing village one will find a population of foreign workers, a majority of them usually women, who come to work in the fishery temporarily. At present, most of these workers are from Poland. In the past dec-

ades there have been women from Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean and other areas. Some of them have stayed and married local men.

Even when we look at fishermen's wives we find important differences among them. Being a wife of a fisherman who is on a large ship that fishes off shore and stays out long is different from being married to a small-boat owner who returns home every evening. In the former case the wife has to stay alone with the children for long periods, in particular if the husband is on a freezer trawler. The freezer trawlers usually stay out for a month at a time and sometimes longer, fishing in international waters, with very short stops in between tours. When the husband is on a small boat fishing locally, the family life is closer to the Icelandic norm of the nuclear family. The position of the wives of small-boat fishers is also different because they are commonly involved in managing the finances of the boat. Some wives are involved in baiting or hiring others to do the work for them. They have gained experience running a small business, even though they usually do not view their work as that of a manager of a small firm. Instead, they usually talk about this work as helping their husbands and as work that can easily be combined with housework. Most fishermen's wives, whether married to small-boat owners or trawler fishermen, have the sole responsibility for the finances of the household and many of them work for wages as well.

Gender Inequalities in the Fishing Communities

Icelandic fishing communities are characterized by a clear division of labour between women and men. This division has become more clearly defined with industrialization (Skaptadóttir 1995). In spite of the fact that women's participation in the labour market is high and they have a great deal of independence both in their homes and at work, gender relations are characterized by inequalities. This can be seen in the freezing plant as well as in other jobs in these communities. Although fish processing is commonly thought of as a woman's job, we find both men and women in the freezing plant. Men and women work there in the same place, but there is a clear gender segregation in tasks. Men and women rarely intermingle either during work or during breaks. Their work is located in different parts of the factory, so they do not see each other much during working hours. Moreover, the jobs performed by women are described as feminine and the jobs performed by men are described in masculine terms. It is more common to find women doing jobs defined as men's jobs than the opposite. However, this is for the most part only true in the lowest paid jobs.

There are fewer jobs within the plant which are defined as women's jobs than as men's jobs. Women cut, clean out worms and pack the fish, and a few are floor managers, although there are fewer female than male supervisors. The work on the pier—driving forklifts and unloading the fish from the ship—is a man's job, although there are some very rare exceptions to this. Men work

in the freezing room, they are commonly floor managers and only men do machine maintenance work. The jobs women perform are generally more monotonous and have become even more monotonous in the last few years with the conveyor belt. They stand at the same place almost all day long, performing the same job. Moreover, with the most recent technological innovations, every aspect of each individual worker's output on the conveyor belt can be monitored. Men have jobs that allow them to move around more, which in turn allows them more control over the work process itself. For example, they can more easily control the speed of their work. They also have more opportunities to talk to others in their jobs. One woman who works in a newly modernized freezing plant in the West Fjords, when I asked her about men's jobs, said: "One does not know what they do. If I were asked 'What does he do?' I would answer 'I don't know, he is just walking here back and forth.' They don't have to stay put in the same place all day."

Only a few men work in fish processing. In one freezing plant where I interviewed women, they tended to de-emphasize the clear gender division and said that there had been men doing this work in their factory and they had been able to do it as well as the women. An older woman, who works in fish processing, explained that it is only very recently that men are to be found in the processing room, cutting and packing fish. She said: "In fact there were two men working with the women when I began in 1962. It was naturally because they were handicapped." When visiting this freezing plant I saw some men (from Poland) in the processing room; they were in fact cutting and cleaning fish, but they were not working on the conveyor belt along with the women. I have also seen foreign men occasionally working in the processing room or packing fish in other factories, but have not seen men working on the conveyor belt except for some whose job was to feed the fish onto it. A woman in her 30s who has worked in the freezing plant of her village, mostly during the summer months in her youth, spoke about men doing women's work in processing: "When I was there [at the freezing plant] then it was 'homo' if a man was cutting, cleaning or packing the fish." Thus it is seen as threatening to masculinity to do such jobs, and many men said to me (but only off the record—not on tape) that they would find it humiliating to have to accept such jobs and would rather be unemployed.

The gendered division of labour is premised on gender-based inequalities. This can be seen when the pattern is broken, as in the pride women evince when they perform men's jobs either in the freezing plant or at sea. By contrast, when men perform work defined as women's, they talk about it as a humiliating experience. They do perform "women's work" in fish processing at sea, on freezer trawlers, but this work is described in more masculine terms as hard work and is much higher paid. A similar division of labour is described by Munk-Madsen and Husmo (1989), based on their research in fish plants in

northern Norway. Although the majority of women I talked to in fishing communities thought it was only fair that men who stay out so long away from their families should get higher wages, not all women agreed with this. Sigrun, who is a recently divorced mother of two who has worked in the freezing plant, expressed some dissatisfaction when I asked her what she thought about her wages in the freezing plant:

> Given how hard this work is, there is an unfair division of labour, that is, the fishermen who are doing the same jobs now in the freezing trawlers naturally have much higher wages than we who work the same jobs on land, but we work hard. This is hard work, people come home very tired. If you see it this way then this is naturally very little salary. But you can live on it.

All the workers in a freezing plant are on the same wage scale. However, it is noticeable that the men who work at the freezing plant are commonly either old or young or not Icelandic and there only temporarily. There are not many Icelandic men there who are middle-aged and consider themselves to be breadwinners, except those in management positions or in maintenance work. By contrast, women of all classes and ages work side by side, foreign and Icelandic, women who are married to skippers or fishermen on trawlers who receive high wages, and others who are married to men who earn low wages. Then there are the few single women who try to make a living for themselves and their children on the low wages earned in the freezing plant. The first group of women usually only work half days but the other works full-time or even more than that and accepts all the extra work they can get. All of these women in many ways lead different lives from each other. However, when they have put on their hair nets, their white shirts and their rubber boots, they all have common identities as fish processors and housewives. At this time gender becomes the more important attribute of their identity and status.

In spite of the high participation of women in paid employment, there is very little evidence to be found of men's increased participation in housework—contrary to what one would expect, I could not find any difference between age groups in this regard. Thus the gendered division of labour is very clearly maintained in the home as well. Cole (1991) described households in Portuguese coastal communities as woman-centred. Households in Icelandic fishing communities can also be said to be woman-centred since the home is very clearly a woman's domain. Men may help their wives to a varying degree but housework continues to be the women's responsibility. A similar pattern was found by Sinclair and Felt (1992) in their study of unpaid domestic work in Newfoundland coastal communities. They found that "an extensive division of labour persists, even when women are employed" (1992:59). Many women pride themselves on being good housewives and keeping clean houses, including those who work full-time. Women are, however, in no way limited to this sphere, and some aspects of their household duties take them outside of

the home. For the women being a good housewife is part of their local identity. For men, working long hours and staying away from the home constitute the more important aspects of being a " real" man in the local community. Just as doing women's work in the freezing plant is not considered manly, so too similar views are expressed concerning men who are considered to be doing too much housework.

Gudrun, a woman in her early thirties, is married to a fisherman and is the mother of two children, six and eight years old. Gudrun works full-time on the pier unloading fishing vessels, a job that is considered to be very "manly." She usually has to go down to her work on the pier when her husband returns from the sea. When I asked Gudrun in the course of an interview whether or not her husband participated in housework when on land, she replied:

> No he does not do that, but he is good at building for the kids and doing things for the kids. Do you understand? . . . No he does not cook and such. No he would probably die in front of the refrigerator, I think he is one of those men. He would not think of opening it.

When I asked her if she thought this was common in the village or among those she knew she said: "Yes, you cannot take those women seriously who tell you that their husbands participate. I don't think they can be taken seriously. They just would not dare to tell you otherwise." In fact most women in her village agreed with her, although in the other villages I found some variation in this regard. Kristín, for example, is a fish-plant worker and has two children. I asked her about her husband's participation in housework and if there were some jobs that he in particular took care of. She said: "No, I take care of it all. It is just when I tell him to do things such as helping with the care of the children, and helping when I am putting them to bed."

One can debate whether these clearly defined gender roles in the household should be seen as an expression of an equal but different position of men and women or as an expression of inequality between them. There certainly are positive images associated with being a housewife and especially a fisherman's wife in Icelandic fishing communities. Fishermen's wives are seen as strong and independent. They act as heads of their households while their men are away at sea. They run their households from day to day, make decisions regarding their children and maintain kinship and community relations. However, as we have seen, not all women in fishing communities are in fact fishermen's wives. Even though they are not seen as independent in the same way as fishermen's wives, the women interviewed in this study who are not married to fishermen share the responsibility of taking care of household finances with their husbands. Women are more often those who take care of the wallet, of paying bills and day-to-day spending. This gives them a certain amount of autonomy and independence although they hardly ever talk about it in such a way. Some women instead talk about this as an added burden to their double

day. To evaluate whether the independence described here means more power or a better position for women one must look at the household in the larger context in which women's wage work is very poorly remunerated. The importance given to their roles as housewives helps justify the low wages they receive, because they are not seen as main providers (Babb 1986; Beneria and Sen 1986; Nash and Fernandez-Kelly 1983).

Summary and Conclusion

We can see from the above discussion that we cannot easily generalize about women in Icelandic fishing communities. There exist some important differences among them. Not all are either fishermen's wives or fish processors, although some are both, and all have either close relatives, friends or neighbours who are. They share a common locally based identity and common identities in relation to the fisheries. These locally based identities can at times overshadow the existing diversities among women and between women and men. We have observed that there are important gender-based inequalities which can, for example, be seen in the freezing plant where women's work has less value than men's and where women are primarily found in the lower-paying jobs. This is a position they share with other Icelandic women who have low-paying jobs in rural and urban areas. In spite of the strength women may get from being central in the household and having strong locally based ties, gender inequalities can easily be discerned as men are those who dominate in the political and economic arena. It is therefore not enough to describe only the different realities of women in fishing communities to better understand the social construction of the feminine. It is also necessary to examine the ways in which gender is socially constructed, based on inequality in the different spheres of society.

In this discussion of women in Icelandic fishing communities I have emphasized the importance of combining an examination of diversity with an analysis of gender in the construction of inequality. If we only describe gender inequality among men and women we may tend to oversimplify the commonalities among women. However if we only examine the differences among women we may lose sight of the commonalities and exaggerate the differences. Thus, I have argued that in order to get a clearer picture of women's position in Icelandic fishing communities we have to examine the social processes which create similarities as well as differences. By examining these processes locally but in a larger context we have seen not only what divides women but also what unites them. In this study I found that women's common identities do not only reflect their common gendered position but are also based on a sense of locality which they themselves help generate. The emphasis placed in the community on common interests with respect to the fisheries can mask differences such as those based on different economic interests and even gender.

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