
CHANGING TIDES

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Gender, Fisheries and Globalization

*Edited by Barbara Neis, Marian Binkley, Siri Gerrard
and Maria Cristina Maneschy*

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In May 2000, a workshop was held in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The workshop brought together feminist researchers and community workers from eighteen countries, along with fish worker representatives from Atlantic Canada. After a week of discussion and debate, workshop participants formed the Gender, Globalization and the Fisheries Network. The Network held a news conference announcing its concerns, goals and commitments. It released a statement that has been widely circulated around the world and is reproduced in full near the end of this volume. The statement outlines ways that globalization in the fisheries has hurt women, their families and coastal communities, and it calls for action to control industrial fisheries and other developments that are causing extensive resource, ecological and social damage in coastal areas around the world, and for improved support and collaboration between researchers and fish workers globally.

Filmmaker Debbie McGee captured the May 2000 workshop in her award-winning video documentary, *Rising From the Ashes: Gender, Globalization and the Fisheries*.² Following the workshop, Atlantic Canada fish workers and activists contributed articles to a special issue of *Yemaya*, a feminist newsletter on women and fisheries published by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF). Since 2000, the Atlantic Canada group has continued to meet, with support from Status of Women Canada, forming a vibrant network of fish workers, labour and women's representatives and researchers in that region.

This edited collection is the next step in a larger strategy developed by the Gender, Globalization and the Fisheries Network during the workshop. One of our goals is to build a dynamic, grounded understanding of the relationships between gender, globalization and fisheries, placing gender

issues front and centre in our interpretation of the many facets of globalization, and taking into account the diversity of women's experiences in different sectors, regions and countries. In keeping with the composition of the Network, which includes fish workers, community workers and academic researchers, this collection includes academic articles, poetry, reports from community organizers and personal stories about fisheries issues related to our central themes. The result, we hope, is richer and more accessible than a standard academic collection would be.

The editors would like to thank the contributors for their patience and commitment to this process, and the ICSF for permission to reproduce articles from *Samudra* and *Yemaya*. This collection would not have been possible without the support of the ICSF, Network members and financial support from Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the International Development Research Centre and Status of Women Canada. Susan Williams took care of many thousands of details and provided important advice on the organization and structure of the collection, and Margery Rose built and formatted the extensive bibliography that is included. We are also indebted to Fernwood Publishing for their contribution to editing and promoting this collection.

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Introduction

Barbara Neis

This book is about the way women's lives and gender relations within the world's fisheries are being shaped by globalization. The collection combines short, focused articles taken from *Samudra* and *Yemaya*, publications of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), with research done by activists and academics from around the world. The short articles give voice to the concerns of fisheries workers while the regional and national case studies scrutinize the links between changes in fisheries associated with globalization and the experiences of women who depend upon fisheries. They also address larger theoretical, cultural and social justice issues related to gender, globalization and fisheries.

The past three decades have witnessed major transformations within the world's fisheries. Locally and globally, an ecological revolution (Merchant 1989) is taking place. This revolution is reflected in the effects of overfishing, the spread of intensive aquaculture and the degradation of coastal and benthic environments. Shifts in knowledge production and in fisheries management reflect changes in the dominant legal, political and ideological frameworks that govern fisheries. Interacting with changes in the environment, and in these frameworks, are changes in patterns of ownership and control, in systems for the production and exchange of fish products and in household and community dynamics, as well as in relationships between those who produce fish products and those who consume them. The dynamics of this ecological revolution are being mediated by gender and by globalization. Women and men are differently represented at every level of the globalization processes and institutions, and the outcomes of this revolution are affecting women and men differently. Among different groups of women, the effects are uneven but substantial.

"Globalization" refers to the era of increasing integration of the world economy that began in the mid-1970s. Far from random, this integration has followed a neo-liberal model, with initiatives designed to "free" the exercise of economic activity. Such initiatives have included increased foreign direct investment (FDI) (Hart 1996), as well as "trade liberalization; the deregulation of production, the labour market and the market of goods and services; and the implementation of regional and international trade agreements" (Beneria and Lind 1995: 2). Triggered by the "debt crisis" of the 1970s and early 1980s, neo-liberal globalization has been associated with national and global level shifts in power and wealth from the poor and middle classes to the rich, as well as with the development and consolidation of enormous and extremely

powerful transnational corporations (TNCs). It has also been linked with an increase in the power of international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) relative to the more democratic and socially concerned United Nations agencies, and with the development of new, rule-making international trade bodies like the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Khor 2001).

During the 1980s, the IMF began imposing structural adjustment programs (SAPs) on countries at risk of defaulting on their external loans. These programs required countries to devalue their currencies, privatize public agencies and industries, reduce subsidies to consumers and food producers, promote export production at the expense of production for local consumption and cut social programs like health and education (Friedmann 1999; Khor 2001; Madeley 2000). The WTO, established in 1995, is now playing a lead role in promoting neo-liberal globalization.

The recent history of the world's fisheries provides some interesting challenges to our understanding of neo-liberal globalization and its consequences for women, men and gender relations. In the mid-1970s, while many other sectors began to move in the direction of reducing constraints on economic activity, the world's marine fisheries were the target of new initiatives designed to constrain fishing investments and the related unfettered destruction of the world's fisheries. The introduction of 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and state-controlled fisheries management regimes would, it was hoped, rehabilitate fish stocks and fishing communities devastated by decades of over-exploitation associated with the development of the distant water fleets.

Twenty years later, many of the world's fish stocks continue to be overfished, and some of the largest and most important, such as the northern cod stocks off northeast Newfoundland and Labrador on Canada's east coast, are in a state of collapse. The serious and persistent problems of excess harvesting capacity and widespread poverty in small-scale fishing communities are signs of a global crisis, particularly in relation to wild fish stocks and marine ecosystems. Indications of the global crisis in fisheries include the large proportion of stocks worldwide that are overfished, dwindling landings relative to fishing effort and evidence that we are fishing down the food chain (UN-FAO 1998; McGoodwin 1990; Pauly et al. 1998; Pauly and Maclean 2003). Declining landings of wild fish and increased global demand are contributing to the rapid expansion of aquaculture production in many parts of the world (Bailey et al. 1996; Wilks 1995).

LeSann has described fisheries as "one of the most highly globalized economic sectors" (1998: 45). This can be seen in the high proportion (nearly 40 percent) of total global fish production traded on the international market, the trend towards internationalization of fishing and fish processing work and labour forces, the increasing vulnerability of fish prices to the effects of global trade in other commodities and the growing control

exercised by a small number of transnational corporations over global fish stocks, global trade and government policies. Another indicator is that fish exports play a key role in debt repayment for many countries of the South.

Within fisheries, globalization has been associated with an intensified export orientation and the spread of joint ventures between rich and poor countries. International organizations such as the IMF have pressured many debtor countries to exchange access to their fishery resources for access to foreign exchange, constraining their ability to limit external ownership and the export of resources and threatening local fishery employment and food self-sufficiency. Joint venture agreements offer large payments to national governments in exchange for access to fish, but they do little to ensure that those most affected by such ventures—coastal fishery communities—actually have access to this wealth (Gorez 1997). In Senegal, for example, joint ventures are eroding the ecological and economic bases for artisanal fisheries, encouraging fishers to invest more intensively in fishing technology, to fish farther afield and to sell their catches to international buyers. In India, small-scale and artisanal fishery people have been struggling against joint ventures for many years (Sharma 1996).

In countries of the North, small-scale fisheries and coastal communities face threats to their existence that are similar to the effects of joint ventures. In Atlantic Canada, for instance, overfishing of key groundfish stocks by corporate-owned trawlers resulted in stock collapse in the 1990s. Interpreted by government as the result of “too many fishermen chasing too few fish,” the stock collapses have been used to justify steps to downsize fisheries, concentrate production and privatize access to fish resources, seriously jeopardizing the future of small-scale fisheries (Neis and Williams 1997). In countries of the North and the South, the expansion of intensive, corporate-controlled aquaculture—at the expense of other, extensive and locally controlled forms—is linked to global processes such as trade liberalization, increased foreign direct investment, technology transfer and the transfer of scientific and management regimes among countries (Bailey et al. 1996; Kurien 1996a; LeSann 1998; McGoodwin 1990; Shrybman 1999; Stonich, Bort and Ovares 1997).

Over the past two decades, globalization has been associated with increased imports of agricultural products from countries of the North into countries of the South. These imports have tended to drive down prices for local farmers, making it more difficult for them to survive (Madeley 2000). In the case of fisheries, fishing activity has expanded more in the South than in the industrialized countries of the North, and fish from developing countries of the South constitutes a growing share of the fish in global markets. Thus, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, China, Chile, Ecuador and Peru represented the leading exporters in the 1990s (LeSann 1998). Due to global shortages, fish tend to migrate from the South to the North in the global fish trade, as indicated by expanding fish consumption in the North,

where it was about three times higher in developed than so-called Third World countries in 1994. Roughly 50 percent of the fish that ends up as fishmeal or fish oil for livestock feed comes from countries of the South, but exports from these countries constituted 70 percent of international trade in these commodities in the 1990s (LeSann 1998). Unlike agriculture, where imports have affected prices for farm produce in countries of the South, fish imports have not affected prices to harvesters, traders and vendors of local fish to the same extent. However, a recent workshop in Thailand on the effects of globalization in fisheries identified this as one of the effects of globalization in some areas (Sharma, this volume). Local markets for fish may also have been affected by imports of alternative types of protein such as chicken.

Globalization is disrupting local fish harvesting and marketing networks and depriving fishery workers and other members of coastal communities of fish as a source of food and income (Fairlie et al. 1995). Fish is a vital form of food, the main source of animal protein for many peoples, particularly in Asia. As indicated by Madeley:

Food is more than a commodity that is bought and sold. It is more than the nutrients that we consume. Food meets many kinds of human needs—cultural, psychological and social among them. It is *the* social good. “Food is a feeling; it’s in the imagination; it binds people. Food is the point of reference which everyone can recognize and share.” Lack of food is the ultimate exclusion. When people don’t have food they are excluded from what the rest of society is doing regularly—eating. It is a human right, totally different from any other commodity. (2000: 25)

In most parts of the world, responsibility for finding, preparing and serving food falls to women, so food is also about gender relations. Fishing, fish processing and fish vending and trading are major sources of employment, particularly in regions and countries dominated by artisanal and small-scale fisheries.

Many of those who depend directly and indirectly on fisheries are women, and gender relations permeate fisheries at every level. Feminist research on neo-liberal globalization, although limited, covers a broad range of issues, with some distinct areas of emphasis. Some researchers have examined the impacts of SAPS on women in their roles as mothers, household managers, community carers and producers, as well as women’s resistance to such programs (Brownhill et al. 1997; Elson 1992a and 1992b; Isla 1997; Sparr 1994). Others have highlighted the impact of globalization on the environment, on women’s access to land and food and on their involvement in the design, control and output of food production systems (Barndt 1999b and 2002; Connelly et al. 1995; Mies 1997; Shiva 1994). These writers have

demonstrated how women's generally lower social, economic and legal status has reduced their capacity to cope with globalization's impacts or to reap the potential benefits of market liberalization and commodification. They have also drawn parallels between the experiences of women in both the South and the North with the so-called "McDonaldization" and "maquilization" processes.

McDonaldization, initiated in the North and spreading to the South, and maquilization, initiated in the South and now appearing in the North, are interrelated processes in the new global economy. McDonaldization is the model offered by the fast-food restaurant as a way to reorganize work in all other sectors. This model is based on efficiency, predictability, calculability or quantifiability, substitution of non-human technology, control and the irrationality of rationality. Central to the model is "flexible," part-time labour. Maquilization, originating in the maquila free trade zones of northern Mexico, now refers to a more generalized work process characterized by feminization of the labour force, extreme segmentation of skill categories, the lowering of real wages and a non-union orientation (Barndt 1999a).

Feminist and other research have emphasized neo-liberal globalization's role in transforming all aspects of everyday life, including food, into globally traded commodities, with very real consequences for women and gender relations (Friedmann 1999; Madeley 2000):

These profound changes that have taken place in the international political economy of food have affected how people work and how they live their daily lives outside of work. What people do to get food, how they prepare and share food, what food they eat, when and with whom, are all influenced by shifts in the food chain. These in turn are intimately connected to the shape of family life. How people work and eat involves gender relations and family relations. Changes in women's and men's roles and in the family are a local counterpart to the global changes in the political economy of food. (Friedmann 1999: 48–49)

Some researchers have linked the commodification of food to the transfer of knowledge and resources from the control of women and Third World peoples to corporate control (Shiva 1997a, 1997b and 1999).

The negative impacts of globalization reflect a basic contradiction inherent in the term. "Global" refers not to universal human interest, but rather to the political space sought by a relatively small group with narrow, parochial interests—transnationals and their political and economic allies—who wish to impose global corporate control (Shiva 1997a and 1997b). International trade agreements allow corporate investments greater freedom of movement and also freedom from social, political or ecological responsibilities to workers, consumers, local communities and the environment

(Connelly et al. 1995; Woman to Woman 1993).

The interactions among relations of gender, race, class and sexuality mean that the effects of trade agreements will vary among different groups of women (Beneria and Lind 1995; Creese and Stasiulis 1996). The complexity of globalization requires more studies of specific globalization initiatives in different industries, sectors and regions (Beneria and Lind 1995), to inform our assessment of the relationship between globalization and gender. This book takes up this challenge by focusing on fisheries in different parts of the world.

Both the amount and quality of research on women and gender relations in fisheries have grown substantially since the 1980s (Davis and Gerrard 2000a and 2000b; Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988; Szala-Meneok 1996). Some local and regional research has explored the gendered consequences of recent fisheries changes, sometimes linking these changes to globalization-related international shifts (Binkley 2002; Díaz 1999; Dietrich 1997; Dietrich and Nayak 2002; Escallier and Maneschky 1996; Harrison 1995; Jansen 1997; MacDonald 1994; Medard and Wilson 1996; Munk-Madsen 1996 and 1998; Neis and Williams 1997; Overå 1993 and 1998b; Pratt 1996; Savard 1996 and 1998; Sharma 1996; Skaptadóttir 1996 and 1998; Vijayan and Nayak 1996; Williams 1988; Williams and Awoyomi, n.d.). In the late 1980s, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) organized a forum on women and aquaculture (Harrison 1995). There is now more interest in gender-based analysis of fisheries-related policy and development initiatives, and more frameworks are available for doing this analysis (CIDA 1999). However, gender issues still tend to be compartmentalized and marginalized within fisheries initiatives and research (Harrison 1995; LeSann 1998).

Since the early 1990s, researchers have joined with activists, development workers and community representatives in different parts of the world to develop feminist, gender-based analyses of the linkages between the dynamics of local fisheries and globalization. One outcome of this has been the formation of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), whose Women in Fisheries Programme set itself the task of producing a global analysis of the fisheries sector and tracing the way that changes in fisheries and the fish trade are affecting women's spaces in these fisheries. Women fish workers, activists and academics in "developed" and "developing" countries are involved in the Programme, and much has been learned from this work (Dietrich 1997; Nayak 2002; Sharma 1996). *Without Women in Fisheries, No Fish in the Sea* (Dietrich 1997), a report evaluating the Women in Fisheries Programme, attributes the continued survival of artisanal fisheries to the resourcefulness of women and children and to the resilience of nature, both of which have been undermined in recent years by ecological degradation and technological, corporate and policy initiatives.

The Norwegian Research Council has funded several projects related to

gender and fisheries in Africa. This research, and an international doctoral workshop in Norway on gender and fisheries, resulted in a special issue of *Women's Studies International Forum*, co-edited by Dona Davis and Siri Gerrard (2000b). Siri Gerrard also organized a series of fishery sessions as part of the Women's Worlds Conference in Tromsø, Norway, in June 1999. At these sessions, activist and academic participants from Canada, Russia, the U.S., Norway, India, Nigeria and Senegal presented papers, continued the development of an international research/strategy network and developed a more informed understanding of the Norwegian situation.

Research on gender and fisheries has highlighted the diversity of gender relations in fisheries around the world (Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988). This diversity is linked to ecological diversity, to variations in the extent to which local relations have been transformed by the penetration of corporations and commodification, and to differences in history, policies and the effects of resource and environmental degradation. It is also linked to cultural and class differences, as well as to differences in household structure related to life cycle phase and kinship structures, in relations between households and the larger community, and to variations in the sexual division of labour.

Despite this diversity, women's access to fisheries resources and the wealth they generate, as well as to ecological knowledge about those resources, is generally mediated through their relationships with men—fishermen, husbands and sons, male-dominated governments and male-dominated science and industry. Major state-initiated management programs tend, almost universally, to further limit women's direct access to fisheries and fisheries wealth, although other state programs may create spaces for women to resist this process. While women tend to be poorer and more vulnerable than their male counterparts, this is not always the case. Different groups of women can have substantially different experiences with macro-level social change.

Like men, women contribute directly to fisheries as workers, organizers and managers in fishing-based households, markets, credit systems, industries and communities. They have fishery knowledge and skills, and they depend on fish resources and industries for their livelihoods and, to some extent, for food self-sufficiency. As with fishermen, most of the women who rely on fisheries are concentrated in the coastal, artisanal fisheries and thus experience conflicts with larger fishing enterprises, creditors, governments and corporations.

Contributors to this collection come from different countries (see Figure One) and spheres of experience, including academic, government, labour and community activism. The contributions reflect a range of theoretical perspectives, including insights from feminist political economy as well as research focused more on ideology, discourse, social construction and eco-feminism, as well as on the social and cultural aspects of globalization. Overall, however, the collection adopts a feminist approach that seeks to be

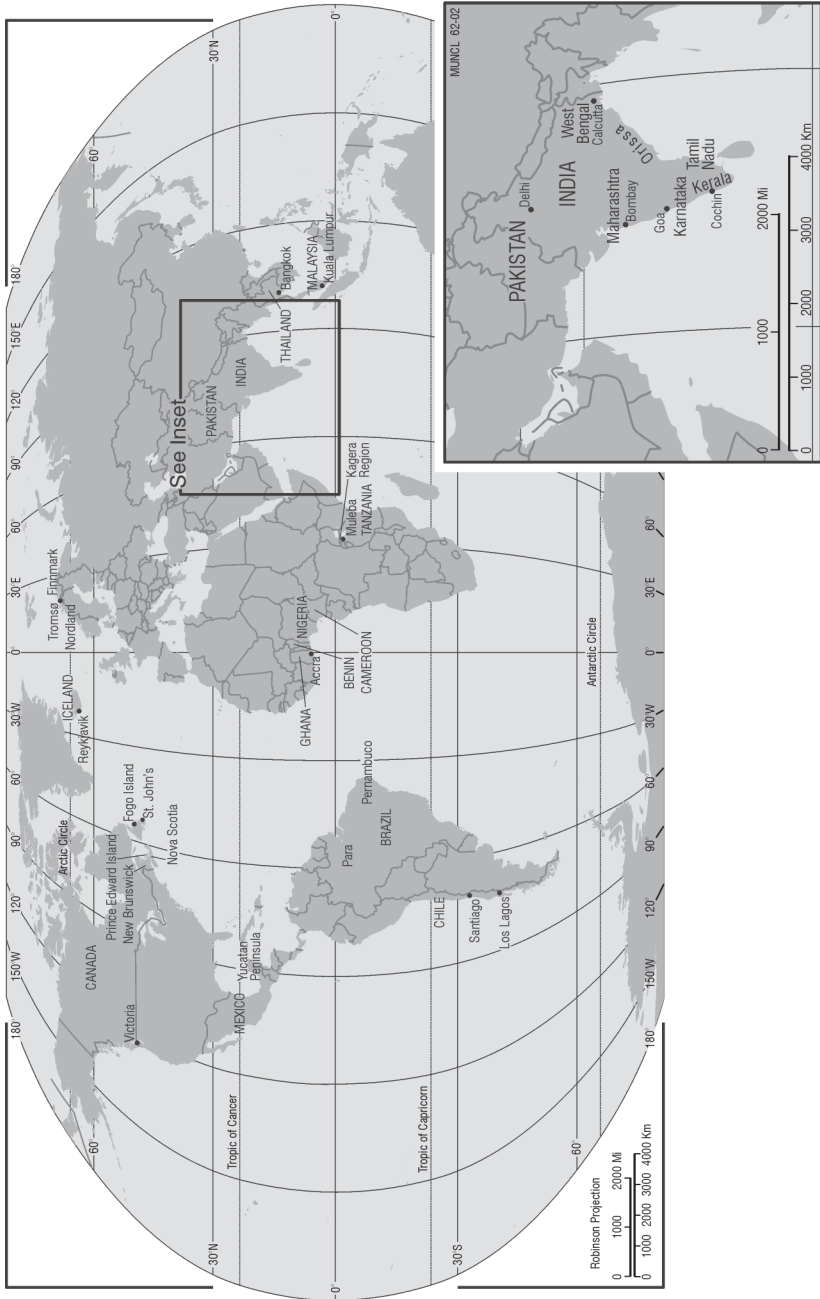
global, critical, holistic and integrative. Our larger goal is to contribute towards the development of a multifaceted understanding of gender, globalization and the fisheries that includes a focus on women in all their diversity, that is multi-centred, that takes into account the role of patriarchy and relations of power in the lives of women and men in fishing communities around the world and that is founded in a struggle to change the world for the betterment of women and all life.

Section One opens with “Globally Fishy Business,” an article by Chandrika Sharma that summarizes the issues and concerns identified at a workshop on globalization and Asian fisheries held in Thailand in 2002. Following this, Martha MacDonald, a feminist economist, locates the central themes in the book within the larger literature on gender and fisheries and gender and globalization. She notes that fisheries provide an excellent vantage point for exploring the processes of capital accumulation and the relations of class and gender. MacDonald also reminds us that intersectoral and international collaboration are necessary in order to challenge the current globalization agenda in the fisheries.

Section Two uses regional case studies of fisheries from India, Brazil and Canada, and intensive shrimp aquaculture from Thailand, to explore the relationships between gender, globalization and fisheries. A short article by Nalini Nayak sets the stage for her longer article on India. Nayak, an Indian activist and researcher, represented the Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) of Kerala, India, at a Public Commission on the impact of globalization on women workers. She describes the turmoil caused in Kerala by the Indian government’s New Economic Policy and the imposition of SAPs. Nayak has played a key role in Indian fisheries struggles and helped to develop the Women in Fisheries Programme within the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF). Her longer article, “Fishing for Need and Not for Greed,” discusses the recent history of India’s fisheries and the impacts on both women and men of the shift towards export-oriented production and joint ventures. She also describes the gender dynamics of India’s powerful National Fishworkers Forum (NFF), a major social movement that has long fought to control the negative impacts of neo-liberal globalization on India’s artisanal fisheries. Nayak’s contributions are followed by a short article by Jasper Goss describing the difficult and poorly paid jobs associated with intensive shrimp aquaculture in Thailand, indicating that the challenges faced by women workers in India’s shrimp fishery are shared by women workers elsewhere.

The next regional case study focuses on Brazil. It opens with excerpts from an interview with Joana Rodrigues Mousinho, president of the fishermen’s *colônia* of Itapissuma in Pernambuco, Brazil, by M.G. Indu of ICSF’s Documentation Centre in Chennai, India. Mousinho describes how women are becoming more active in the union, fighting the destruction of their fisheries habitats. This is followed by a contribution from sociologist

Figure 1



Maria Cristina Maneschy and political scientist Maria Luzia Álvares, both from Brazil. They describe the social roles of women in the coastal communities of Pará state in northeastern Brazil, exploring the effects on these women of structural adjustment programs in the fisheries. Traditional women's roles dictate their daily routines as they carry out unpaid domestic labour in households and the community. Their roles in the fisheries are more transitory. Although they perform paid work in both domestic and industrial settings, there are no mechanisms for granting them the identity of fisherpersons or fish workers, and they are largely excluded from social security programs and the full benefits of citizenship. This makes them particularly vulnerable to the effects of structural adjustment programs.

The third region of focus is Canada's Atlantic Coast. The collapse of groundfish stocks in the 1990s, and the resultant fishing moratoria, has decimated many Newfoundland coastal communities. Anthropologist Marian Binkley documents the ways restructuring in the fishery in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, in the wake of the collapse of the regional groundfish stocks in the 1990s has enhanced the importance of women's paid and unpaid labour, within household-based fishing enterprises and outside them. These women have willingly accepted the extra burdens because they recognize the needs of their households as legitimate and urgent. Binkley finds that women's social and emotional support and their labour are the "bitter end" for fishing-dependent households and for the coastal fishery in that they are essential to their survival, like the piece of rope fishers refer to as the "bitter end" which, when tied around a set of posts, hold a boat to the shore. They are also the "bitter end" in another sense as well because their support and labour are an indication of the demise of these households and the coastal fishery.

A chapter by Modesta Medard, a researcher at the Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute, is the fourth regional case study in the collection. Her chapter deals with gender patterns in the fishing industry in the Kagera Region bordering Lake Victoria in northwestern Tanzania. In this area, the shift from fishing for local markets to fishing for export and ecological changes that increased harvests of Nile perch have produced a dynamic industry and some serious challenges for local women. Medard describes the response of one group of women, the Tweyambe Group, to these challenges. This section ends with "Life and Debt," an excerpt from M.G. Indu's interview with a woman fish vendor from Kerala, India, who talks about her everyday life.

Section Three deals with the gendered and racialized processes associated with globalization today and in the past, including the issue of individual and collective "rights." It opens with "Migrating to Survive," an article by Laura Vidal about women crab processing workers from Tabasco, Mexico, who travel to North Carolina in the U.S. to process blue crab. The next contribution is from Alicja Muszynski, a Canadian sociologist, who uses the

history of salmon fisheries in British Columbia, Canada, to see if postcolonial theories can shed light on the gendered and racialized construction of cheap wage labour in fisheries. Muszynski challenges the failure of neo-liberal thinking to see the importance of history, and of race and gender, in globalization processes.

Neo-liberalism places strong emphasis on individual and corporate rights, but it often neglects the rights of workers. A short article, “Cleaned Out,” by Donna Lewis, a shellfisher from Prince Edward Island, Canada, describes licensing regulations that are forcing women “cleaners” out of the oyster harvesting boats. A contribution from Bonnie McCay, an American anthropologist, closes out this section. McCay presents a case study of a human rights challenge by women fish plant workers who were laid off by a local cooperative on Fogo Island, Newfoundland, Canada. McCay writes about the dilemma associated with the need to recognize individual rights—in this case, the rights of women workers—where the urgent concerns of their communities and businesses seem to call for abrogating these rights. Ironically, it was a producer/worker cooperative that denied work and seniority to a group of women because their fisher husbands did not sell their crab to the cooperative.

Section Four focuses on the relationships between globalization, management initiatives within fisheries and gender relations. This section explores issues related to the management of fish resources and coastal environments, addressing risks to reproductive health among women in fishing communities and management issues related to quality control and occupational health within fish processing plants. A short article, “Are Women Martians?” by Ariella Pahlke, describes her experiences as a representative of Nova Scotia’s Women’s FishNet at a consultation about fisheries management organized by Canada’s Department of Fisheries and Oceans. In the next contribution, Norwegian geographer Ragnhild Overå observes that whereas African women are usually portrayed as economically marginalized and hard-hit by globalization, the case of entrepreneurial women on the Ghanaian coast is more complex. In the 1970s and 1980s, joint ventures resulted in primarily foreign-owned industrial trawlers operating on this coast. Female traders, some of whom were “entrepreneurs,” expanded their activities by supplying the trawler crews with food and, in exchange, the trawlers filled the women’s canoes with fish that would have been thrown overboard. Overå examines the local impact of the trade that developed from this, a trade that takes place in the coastal borderland between local and global capital interests. She highlights the differences between the women entrepreneurs’ experiences with globalization and those of the women they employ.

In their case study of Icelandic fisheries, Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir and Hulda Proppé, Icelandic feminist anthropologists, criticize the tendency in globalization literature to treat women as victims, cheap labour and bearers

of traditions. They note that a feminist perspective can be used to question the neutrality of gender-blind science and the resource management systems based on such science. They describe Iceland's Individual Transferable Quota system (a neo-liberal fisheries management strategy) and its impacts on women and men in Icelandic fishing villages. The description is timely, given the growing number of countries where this management system is being implemented.

The next contribution, "Not Amusing," comes from information provided by Sushila Cordozo of Mumbai, India, concerning the impact that India's first and largest amusement park is having on nearby fishing communities. Next, Katherine Savard, a Canadian social scientist, and Julia Fraga, a Mexican sociologist, provide an overview of fisheries management practices in the Caribbean. They show how technological change, resource depletion and the reduction of household incomes—all linked to globalization—are affecting the lives of women and men in this region. They then use a gender analysis to scrutinize a recent initiative to create a Marine Protected Area in Yucatan state, Mexico, exploring barriers to women's involvement in local fisheries organizations and fisheries management. They also document local efforts to overcome these barriers.

"The Power of Knowledge," an article by P. Balan of the Penang Inshore Fishermen's Welfare Association (PIFWA) in Malaysia, describes the way that drug addiction and the sexual practices of fishermen are putting their wives and children at risk. Marit Husmo, a Norwegian social scientist, offers a case study of the implementation of a quality assurance system in Norwegian fish processing in the early 1990s. The system was introduced in response to a new set of rules for the production of seafood for European Union markets. Imported from Japan, Total Quality Management (TQM) was supposed to motivate employees by involving them in designing and running production. Drawing on institutional theory, Husmo shows that in Norwegian plants, TQM acted to cement gender differences within firms, largely upholding the gender stratification system. In "We, Women, Are Out There," Mildred Skinner, a fish harvester in Newfoundland, describes some of the health risks confronting women who have gone fishing in Atlantic Canada in recent years in order to help sustain small fishing enterprises negatively affected by the collapse of groundfish stocks, by the erosion of Canadian social programs designed to reduce regional disparities and by recent fisheries management initiatives. Concluding this section, Estrella Díaz, a community-based Chilean researcher, completed a gender-based analysis of occupational health risks confronting women and men who work in fish and shellfish plants in one region of Chile. Most of these plants produce products from aquacultured salmon and mussels for export markets. International trade agreements are concerned, in part, with complementarity in labour standards among participating countries. Díaz documents serious occupational health risks for these workers, as well as

difficulty accessing compensation benefits. She contrasts the attention and investment that companies and the Chilean government are directing towards protecting food quality with their neglect of occupational health risks faced by the workers.

Section Five treats research as one face of globalization. The writers have important things to say about alternative approaches to research and the contribution that North/South research collaborations on gender, globalization and the fisheries can make to the development of alternatives to neo-liberal globalization. In the first piece, Norwegian anthropologist Siri Gerrard draws on Arjun Appadurai's (1996) analysis of globalization and culture to argue that research and knowledge building are important aspects of globalization. In its contemporary form, globalization is perpetuating inequalities in access to the resources required for learning, teaching and cultural criticism—resources vital to the development of democratic research communities. Gerrard draws on her research experiences in Norway, Tanzania and the Cameroon to argue for a research model based on the exchange of knowledge rather than the one-way transfer of knowledge, and for the importance of women and women's perspectives in fishery-related knowledge production. Nicole Power and Donna Harrison, two Canadian social scientists, use insights from a conceptual framework developed in India by feminist economist Bina Agarwal to interpret the history of Newfoundland's fisheries and the gendered effects of the stock collapse. In so doing, they seek to demonstrate that research in the North can benefit from insights developed in the South and that intellectual imperialism impedes the development of effective theory and action in strategizing against the global practices of capital.

Section Six, "Last Words," closes the book. It begins with a statement from the Gender, Globalization and Fisheries Workshop held in Newfoundland, Canada, in May 2000, that initiated the development of this collection. This is followed by a concluding chapter in which editors Maneschy and Neis return to the overarching theme of globalization, gender and world fisheries, highlighting some of the key findings from the contributions, identifying gaps in our knowledge and priorities for future work.

Section One

FROM TRAWL TO TABLE IN GLOBALIZING FISHERIES

Globally Fishy Business¹

Chandrika Sharma

Millions of people in Asia depend on fisheries for a living, making it a critical component of economic growth and a major source of food security in the region. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), in 1990, 84 percent of the world's fishers were concentrated in Asia—nine million in China, nearly six million in India and four million in Vietnam, Indonesia, Bangladesh and the Philippines taken together. The majority are small-scale, artisanal fishers, eking out a living from coastal and inshore resources. A conservative estimate would place the total number of people involved in fishing, processing, trading and other fisheries-related activities in Asia at about 120 million. For artisanal fishing communities, fishing is a source of livelihood as well as a culture and a way of life.

Asian fisheries have, however, witnessed major changes in the past few decades, as governments have sought to modernize the sector by bringing in more efficient gear and technologies, including bottom-trawling and purse-seining. The focus on expanding production and exports has received an impetus in the current phase of globalization. It was to discuss these developments and their implications for the small-scale marine and inland fisheries sector that representatives of fisherfolk and peasant organizations as well as NGOs from eleven countries in Asia met from 25 to 29 January 2002 at Prince of Songkla University, Hat Yai, Thailand for the Asian Fisherfolk Conference: Cut Away the Net of Globalization. Representatives from the following countries were present: Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam, along with representatives from the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) and Aotearoa-New Zealand and South Africa.

The conference was organized with the following objectives:

- to analyze the impact of globalization, specifically liberalization, privatization and deregulation, on the small-scale fisheries sector;
- to document initiatives and gains by Asian fisherfolk to improve their situation, such as, but not limited to, organizing, peoples' campaigns,

- advocacy, resource management and lobbying;
- to learn about the role and situation of women in the fisheries sector; and
- to consolidate networks among fisherfolk organizations in the Asian region.

The conference was a joint initiative of several organizations. These included the Federation of Fisherfolk of Thailand, the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), the Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (FSA), NGO-COD, the World Wildlife Fund, the Andaman Project, the Prince of Songkhla University and the Waliluk University—all from Thailand, as well as Pamalakaya (the National Federation of Fisherfolk Organizations in the Philippines), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and the Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD).

Participants felt that globalization processes lead to a loss of income and livelihood, dislocation from fishing grounds, denial of access rights, break-up of communities, social problems, loss of traditional systems of knowledge and wisdom, degradation and destruction of aquatic resources and violations of human rights.

The pressure on women of fishing communities has increased in specific ways, translating directly into increased workloads, stress and pressure to earn higher incomes. Participants called for a reversal of laws, programs and policies as well as the dismantling of institutions of globalization that are primarily attuned to the interests of powerful economic players and that marginalize fishing communities.

Participants demanded an immediate halt to, among other things, the following:

- destructive use of fishing gear like trawlers, push-nets, anchovy purse-seines (using lights), fine-meshed nets and other similarly destructive practices that deplete aquatic resources and destroy the very livelihood of artisanal fishers;
- fisheries access agreements between countries, as well as joint ventures and other similar arrangements for harvesting and utilizing aquatic resources that deplete these resources and deprive local fishers of their livelihoods;
- investment, subsidies and other forms of State support to the industrial and large-scale sector and to non-owner operated mechanized vessels that have led to overcapacity and overcapitalization;
- further growth in capacity of domestic industrial fleets in several countries of the Asian region and the export of this overcapacity (through formal and informal means) to waters of neighbouring countries, impacting negatively on artisanal fishers, both of the home country and

- of the country they fish in;
- “free trade” in fish and fish products, given the overwhelming evidence from all parts of the world that free trade in natural resources leads to the rapid destruction of resources and of livelihoods of the majority, even as it brings in profits in the short run for a few;
- imports of fish and fish products, especially of products harvested/processed locally, that push down prices and impact negatively on incomes and livelihoods of local fishers/ processors, including the women;
- export-oriented policies of governments, often under the compulsion of repaying foreign debts, even as domestic fish supplies stagnate, and sections of the population are malnourished, endangering local food security and sovereignty;
- export-oriented aquaculture, mariculture and other similar forms of monoculture, not including traditional aquaculture, that are displacing local communities and destroying their environment;
- collection of live coral fish and coral reefs for export;
- adoption of technologies, programs and policies that marginalize the role of women in the fisheries sector;
- big “development” projects, such as construction of dams, bunds and barriers that destroy the livelihood of local fishers, both in the inland and marine sectors, displace local communities and destroy local habitats such as mangroves;
- the privatization of coastal commons and water bodies through activities like industrial expansion, tourism, aquaculture and the establishment of national parks, which displace local communities and destroy their way of life;
- polluting activities, including indiscriminate use of agrochemicals, mining, dumping and transshipment of toxic and nuclear wastes, that impact negatively on the health of local populations and lead to the degradation of inland and coastal habitats;
- introduction of exotic species in inland water bodies for aquaculture, a practice that has led to the extinction of local species and impacted negatively on local ecosystems;
- introduction of genetically modified fish species in water bodies, even on an experimental basis, in keeping with the internationally agreed “precautionary principle”;
- violence against small-scale fishers, including destruction of their life and gear by the owners of industrial and commercial fleets;
- detention of fishers by neighbouring countries in the Asian region for alleged illegal fishing; and
- human rights violations by the State, in the form of arrests and detentions of members of fishing communities and their organizations.

Participants called for establishing participatory mechanisms to ensure that all decisions related to the use and management of fisheries resources at the local, national and international level are made in partnership with the fisherfolk. They stressed the need for states in the region to work out appropriate mechanisms for the release of artisanal fishers who drift into the waters of neighbouring countries and face punishments completely disproportionate to their offence. They also called for an agreement that ensures safety for artisanal fishers who target shared stocks between countries, taking into account traditional rights to access such resources. In this context, they endorsed Point 7 of the Statement from the recent meeting organized by ICSF, titled *Forging Unity: Coastal Communities and the Indian Ocean's Future*.

Above all, participants called for the sustainable and non-destructive management and use of the resources of the lakes, rivers, seas and oceans by all humankind and asserted that the rights of artisanal fishing communities—the guardians of these water bodies—to use, manage and benefit from them must be protected and accepted.

Finally, participants committed to protecting the rights to life and livelihood of fishing communities and to protecting and conserving aquatic resources, indigenous species and ecosystems, while demonstrating concrete alternatives towards a people-centred development. They also committed to observing World Fisheries Day on 21 November, Anti-WTO day on 30 November and World Food Day on 16 October, at the Asian level, with a regionally co-ordinated action by fishing communities to demonstrate their solidarity.

Note

1. This article was first published in *Samudra* 31, March 2002, a journal from the ICSF.

Lessons and Linkages

Building a Framework for Analyzing the Relationships between Gender, Globalization and the Fisheries

Martha MacDonald

While a considerable amount has been written about gender and globalization, there has been little application of this to fisheries. Globalization has affected fisheries worldwide, along with the women, men and communities dependent on this resource. What insights from the broader literature on gender and globalization can be applied to fisheries? What key issues need to be addressed? What information is needed for a thorough gender analysis in the context of globalization? How can these global processes be challenged and altered? By pooling the knowledge of fisheries activists and researchers from around the world, the conceptual work, documentation and action can move forward.

Fisheries have long provided interesting vantage points from which to explore processes of capital accumulation and relations of class and gender. The community basis of most fisheries highlights relationships that might be lost in a more geographically dispersed industry. Interactions between the gender division of labour in wage work, family production and domestic work are more visible in a context where household members are integrated in one way or another into the same industry (Barber 1992; Gerrard 1995; MacDonald and Connelly 1989; Sinclair and Felt 1992). Alternative modes of production interact, often in the same community (Apostle and Barrett 1992). The state of heavily fished wild stocks highlights the environmentally destructive combination of market forces with modern technological and management regimes (MacDonald 1994; Neis and Williams 1997). In the context of globalization, fisheries continue to offer a unique window into these same processes. Linking the experiences of fisheries communities worldwide will contribute to an understanding of globalization in general, its gendered nature and its failure as a basis for sustainable development—in human or ecological terms.

Fishing communities around the world have had common experiences of stock depletion, lost livelihoods, deteriorating conditions of work and disintegration of communities in the wake of new technologies and new management and trade regimes. Recent developments in fisheries have often not benefited women, men and their families. It is not a simple story of jobs lost in one part of the world and jobs gained in another. Insights from previous work on gender and fisheries, globalization and fisheries, and

gender and globalization can guide us in developing a gendered analysis of globalization, gender, fishery workers and fisheries communities in the current context.

Lessons from Gender and Fisheries Research

What have been the focus and insights of gender and fisheries research in the past? As with other work on women and the economy, research on the fishery began by making women's contributions visible—documenting the importance of the unpaid work of women to family fishing enterprises and communities (Gerrard 1995; MacDonald and Connelly 1989; Munk-Madsen 2000; Porter 1985b; Thompson 1985; Williams 1988). This work highlighted the relationship between unpaid and paid work and the need for women's contributions to be better recognized—whether in social security, development or fisheries management policy. Research also focused on the gendered division of labour in paid work—in harvesting, processing and distribution—and the gender inequalities in wages, working conditions and access to income support (Ilcan 1986; Nadel-Klein and Davis 1988). Finally, this research addressed issues of intra-household labour allocation, workload and access to income (Larkin 1990; MacDonald 1994; Neis 1999).

Research on these issues has often been situated in the context of restructuring in the fishing industry—whether it be in a developing country where new technologies are introduced that alter traditional practices (Nayak 1993) or in Atlantic Canada, where merchant control of the household fishery gave way to industrial mass production, which then collapsed in the wake of changing markets and resource depletion (MacDonald 1994; MacDonald and Connelly 1989; Neis 1987). The industrialization of the Atlantic Canadian fishery in the postwar era moved women's processing work into the plants and changed family work and income patterns. Given the gendered division of labour in the industry and the community, the pressures of fisheries restructuring in the 1980s differentially affected men and women, as did the crisis and collapse of the groundfishery in the 1990s (MacDonald and Connelly 1989; McGrath, Neis and Porter 1995; Neis and Williams 1997). The idea, then, of a gender and restructuring analysis of the fishery is not new.

Gender analysis in the fishery has also necessarily been situated in a policy context, given that fisheries in many parts of the world have been shaped by policy interventions, from resource management strategies to social security programs to community development policy. Researchers have clearly revealed the gendered assumptions and impacts of a host of policies—whether it be access to the resource as a result of fisheries management regulations, access to new technology offered by extension workers, access to income security support or access to labour adjustment support in the wake of fishery collapse (Canada-HRDC 1996; Connelly and MacDonald 1992; Munk-Madsen 1998; Muzychka 1994; Neis and Williams

1997). Policy is not gender-neutral, as has been documented in many fishery contexts and communities. The fight for women's fair access and participation has been ongoing. Women have pursued these aims through involvement in both local and international fishery organizations, often encountering resistance within these male-dominated groups (Gerrard 1995; Maneschy and Álvares, this volume; Medard, this volume; Nayak, this volume).

Thus, an analysis of globalization, gender and fisheries builds on the foundation of past work that has made women's contributions visible in the context of restructuring, bringing to light the gendered assumptions and impacts of policy, and mobilizing women to work within and alongside fishery organizations to have their voices heard.

Lessons from Globalization and Fisheries Research

Given that industry restructuring and policy impacts have long been a crucial part of gender analysis in the fisheries, what has changed? How does globalization affect this tradition of gender analysis? At the simplest level, fisheries restructuring must be placed in the context of broader restructuring. The links between what is happening in fisheries and what is happening in other industries are important. Many of the trends in technology and markets are occurring across industries. While there are important peculiarities about the fishery, it is important to see the commonalities. Much has been written about industries such as electronics and textiles in a globalized market, particularly regarding the mobility of capital and the feminization of labour (Berik 1999). What patterns are similar to fisheries? Agriculture has also received considerable attention, especially regarding the implications of biotechnology and issues related to food security, which have obvious parallels with fisheries (Barlow and Clarke 2000; Shiva 1999).

As well as putting fisheries restructuring in the context of broader industrial restructuring, we need to develop a more integrated understanding of the global dynamics of the industry. My own work on fisheries restructuring in Atlantic Canada in the early 1980s took account of the industrialization of the international fishing effort off our coasts and changes in U.S. markets (MacDonald and Connelly 1989), but it did not really venture further afield than this. By the 1990s, the analysis had to include strategies by large companies to access new and far-flung fish stocks, buy processing facilities and brand names in other countries, sell in markets around the world and diversify into other food products such as chicken and pasta (MacDonald 1994). Today, fisheries research has to take account of the diffusion of technology around the world, the appropriation of local knowledge and the links to other industries ranging from international fast food chains to agribusiness (Barrientos and Perrons 1999).

There is some debate in the literature about whether globalization is anything new or just the current manifestation of long-standing principles of capitalist development. Technological change and the international

search for new markets, resources and cheap labour have been the essence of capitalism since the beginning and have been theoretically important parts of the analysis of the market in both mainstream and radical economics (Beneria 1999; MacDonald 1990). Fishing, like agriculture, has long been characterized by the coexistence of subsistence production with production of commodities for an international market. In the case of the Atlantic fishery, Europeans first came to Canadian waters in search of codfish and whales to be sold on the European market. Fish were traded around the world throughout our history; small, “independent” producers have long been integrated into an international merchant, and then capitalist, economy (Apostle and Barrett 1992).

While the fundamental principles of the international economy may not have changed, the present conjuncture of forces has particular elements that justify the label “globalization.” Key factors are: the impact of information technology; the heightened mobility of capital; the dominance of neo-liberal economic ideology; and the role of national governments and international organizations (such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization) in facilitating global capitalism through supply-side policies to liberalize trade and capital flows and encourage deregulation, privatization and export specialization (Beneria 1999; Berik 1999). National and international institutional frameworks are being reshaped to support unfettered international trade, competition and an expansion and deepening of markets, subsuming society to the economy on a worldwide scale that is unprecedented. What is really new, then, is the institutional structure, more than the economic forces, and thus the pace, uniformity and interconnections of the processes of restructuring occurring worldwide.

Regardless of our interpretation of globalization, changes in local fisheries or communities can no longer be understood without reference to developments in other countries and on the international policy front. Increased international competition and technological change have resulted in an intensification of fishing effort. The mobility of capital has increased. Despite the long-standing existence of an international market, fish companies in the past were limited in their mobility by the nature of the resource: they were tied to where the fish were. With the development of aquaculture, this is no longer the case. Neither do harvesting and processing necessarily have a local geographic nexus, as fish may be processed at sea by workers from diverse areas, or frozen and shipped long distances for processing. As with other footloose industries, fishing companies can now draw on alternative sources of labour around the world—either directly, or through ownership links, joint ventures, networks and subcontracting relationships (MacDonald 1994; McMichael 1999; Standing 1999).

Fisheries and aquaculture technology is moving rapidly around the world, displacing traditional methods (Nayak 1993). Fisheries management models are also moving internationally, displacing locally developed formal

and informal management mechanisms. Privatization is being played out in management initiatives such as Enterprise Allocations and Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs), which are exported from country to country with the aim of privatizing and controlling access to the resource. As a consequence, local fishers are losing their traditional access to the resource, and quotas are concentrating in the hands of corporations and absentee owners (McCay et al. 1995; Munk-Madsen 1998). Export-oriented policies have led countries to focus on industrialized production in one fishery, often degrading other fish resources and displacing traditional fisheries and the communities dependent on them (Nayak, this volume).

The destructive side of globalization is revealed through the impacts of these changes. For example, competitive pressures and the application of increasingly sophisticated technology are bringing stocks close to extinction, as in the case of northern cod in Atlantic Canada. When this happens in a particular area, workers and communities suffer, but capital can move on—new species and new communities can be exploited. With globalization, companies have diversified and achieved flexibility, while workers and communities have lost flexibility. Traditional fishing practices preserved the resource and integrated fishing into a set of activities that provided livelihoods for households and communities. New technologies and export-oriented fisheries have led households and communities into specialization, with the resulting inability to survive fluctuations in fish stocks or markets (MacDonald 1994). Issues of resource sustainability and environmental destruction are now highlighted in fishing as in agriculture and forestry. Food security issues also arise, when free trade in food threatens a country's ability to feed itself (Medard, this volume; Shiva 1999). Food safety is also a larger concern, for example, the unknown risks of genetically modified organisms and aquaculture products. Occupational health risks follow technologies and regulatory regimes as they move around the world (Díaz, this volume). Workers, communities, fishery resources and marine ecosystems as a whole have become more vulnerable with globalization and neo-liberal government policies.

Lessons from Gender and Globalization

The impacts of globalization noted above are not gender neutral: men and women are affected differently as workers, family members and in the community. In considering the specific case of the fisheries, one can learn from the wealth of research and writing on gender and globalization. Early work emphasized the gender impacts of globalization—for example, the negative effects of structural adjustment policies on women (Beneria 1995; Elson 1991). More recent work has addressed the ways that globalization processes are fundamentally gendered—for example, in the reliance on the elasticity of women's unpaid labour to absorb the costs of economic restructuring and government downsizing (Beneria 1999; Berik 1999; Cagatay,

Elson and Grown 1995). The key themes that have emerged from this literature are described below.

Feminization and casualization of labour

There is considerable attention to the role of cheap female labour in the flexibility strategies of corporations—for example, in *maquiladoras* and labour-intensive export processing industries throughout the developing world (Standing 1989 and 1999). Gender wage inequality is an important source of export growth (Elson 1995; Seguino 1997). While wage labour provides women with income and a measure of economic independence, it does not necessarily mean a net improvement in their well-being. Women often become “free to labour” when families lose independent access to productive resources. There are obvious links between this process and the loss of community-based fisheries worldwide.

More recently, feminization has come to be associated with the casualization of work that has occurred for both men and women. Jobs in general have taken on the characteristics of low pay and insecurity traditionally associated with women’s jobs (Berik 1999; Vosko 1998). Precarious employment, deteriorating working conditions, new occupational health risks and weakening of labour standards are part of this as well. Fisheries communities in Atlantic Canada have experienced casualization of labour in the past decade (MacDonald 1994).

Gender division of labour

Given the pervasive gender division of labour worldwide, global changes in production are affecting women and men differently. As the fishery restructures through technological change and the introduction of new species and products, the work being created and lost is gendered. New fisheries policies also affect women and men differently because of the different work they do. Canadian researchers have analyzed the differential impacts on women and men of trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (Cohen 1987; Gabriel and MacDonald 1996), and labour adjustment programs introduced with the Atlantic Canada groundfish moratorium (Canada-HRDC 1996; Muzychka 1994; Neis and Williams 1997). These differential impacts have their roots in the gendered division of labour.

Women’s unpaid work

Economic restructuring has had severe consequences for the unpaid work of women—in households, communities and subsistence production. There is much documentation of the increased workload of women due to cuts in health, education and social services as a result of structural adjustment policies and government downsizing (Connelly et al. 1995; Elson 1995). The work that women do to find firewood, clean water and other daily necessities

has also increased, in the wake of resource privatization and environmental destruction associated with export-oriented production (Agarwal 1991; Shiva 1999). Women also disproportionately bear the stress and emotional burden of families dealing with livelihood loss, as in the case of Atlantic Canada's groundfish moratorium (Canada-HRDC 1996; Muzychka 1994).

Access to resources

Women have unequal access to resources needed to survive in the global economy—including natural resources, but also credit, new technologies and labour adjustment program entitlements. With export fisheries development, for example, women may lose their access to common resources (Nayak, this volume). With adjustment programs such as the Atlantic Groundfish Adjustment Strategy (TAGS), women fishers and harvesting workers were disproportionately barred from benefits and appropriate retraining (Canada-HRDC 1996; Power and Harrison, this volume). Parallels can be drawn to the experience of women in farming as family businesses have been undermined by state economic and urbanization policies.

Gender relations

Globalization uses existing gender relations, intensifying the unpaid work of women and exploiting the gendered division of labour in pursuit of cheap labour. It also changes gender relations in complex ways that can be either positive or negative for women (Beneria 1999). Women may gain economic independence, and the market may break up some patriarchal traditions. On the other hand, women may lose traditional sources of power, and traditional gender inequities may be exacerbated as families and communities respond to economic crisis and insecurity (Beneria 1999; Connelly et al. 1995).

The need to engender macro-economic analysis

Given the importance of gender as an analytical factor at the micro-economic level of households and labour markets, feminist economists have incorporated gender into the macro-economic analysis that underlies national and international fiscal and trade policy (Beneria 1999; Berik 1999; Cagatay, Elson and Grown 1995). These economists echo concerns raised by the women's movement around the world. They argue that models and policy must take account of intra-household inequalities in the distribution of labour and income, whereby women may disproportionately bear the burdens of export development and structural adjustment policies. They emphasize that there are feedback mechanisms from these household-level impacts to macroeconomic outcomes, as the quality of health and education deteriorates. Issues of sustainability in human and ecological terms are also addressed. Finally, they argue that the monetary aggregates on which economic policy decisions are based do not adequately measure economic

reality. Unpaid production is not counted, nor is the value of women's reproductive labour, which sustains the health, education and well-being of families and communities. Therefore, the economic "gains" from global development are overstated, and the true costs are not measured.

Globalization, Gender and Fisheries: Mapping the Linkages

The knowledge and experience gained in these research areas are the foundation on which to build an analysis of gender, globalization and the fisheries. One can imagine a set of road maps depicting local patterns and international linkages. At the community level, we need to map the changes that have occurred in the harvesting, processing and distribution of fish products (species caught, technology, markets, ownership). Gender issues include the impact on women's access to resources, opportunity to make a living and burden of unpaid work, as well as the broader implications associated with sustainability of resources, communities, cultures and livelihoods. Each community analysis contributes to the development of an international road map of the fisheries, with women clearly visible.

How has globalization changed the fisheries map? The industry must be examined "from trawl to table" for each species. Where, how and by whom are fish harvested, processed, distributed and consumed? Who gets the work, the profits and the products? Where are men and women located in this picture? How have these patterns changed? For example, the change to export fisheries may be eliminating women's traditional roles in marketing and processing and may be breaking the geographic coherence of the harvest-process-consumption nexus that sustains communities. Geographic concentration of harvesting and processing may be occurring in a region as a result of concentration of ownership, changes in technology, intensified international competition or new resource management regimes, leaving many communities without access to their traditional resource base or to employment in harvesting, processing and marketing. The switch to new species may alter the geographic location of harvesting and processing and the gendered division of labour.

We need to reveal the links from one component to the others in the industry chain for each fishery. As harvesting changes from inshore to offshore, or from wild fish to aquaculture, what impacts occur in processing? How do changes in consumer markets affect harvesting and processing? For example, how is the worldwide expansion of fast food and the McJobs that it creates (primarily for women) changing the fishing industry? Who supplies the product? How and where is it caught and processed, and by whom? What are the ownership links across the industry? What happens to the supply of local food fish, in terms of price and availability? An example of such mapping is a study that connects the transformation of retail supermarkets in the U.K. with the export fruit industry in Chile, linking the situation of women as producers and consumers in these disparate corners

of the global food chain (Barrientos and Perrons 1999). There are many other examples of the linkages and feedback mechanisms that need to be explored.

The species maps need to be overlapping and dynamically interrelated, showing the links across species. How do actions in one fishery influence other fisheries? This includes ecological issues of resource management, questions about the use of some fish as inputs in other fisheries (as bait or food) and issues related to by-catches and by-products.

Linkages around the world are especially critical. The picture of a particular community and region can only be complete with knowledge of related developments in other parts of the world. For example, how are the shrimp fisheries in India and Newfoundland and Labrador connected, and what commonalities and differences exist in the situation of women in these two regions as the world market has developed? The maps must also include links with other sectors. For example, as agribusiness and export fisheries expand, they may disrupt the traditional ability of families to combine small-scale farming and fishing as a livelihood strategy. Independent producers are turned into wage labourers, and watercourses are polluted. How are women's work and well-being affected? Tourism also overlaps with the fishery in many parts of the world, often to women's disadvantage. A final goal of the mapping would be to show how fisheries are shaped by a diverse range of gendered policies, from local and national fisheries policies such as stock management regulations affecting access, to general national policies concerning unemployment insurance, trade and labour market adjustment, to international agreements related to trade, investment and finance. International trade policies will be increasingly relevant to understanding changes in the fisheries road map. Trade panels make decisions that undermine our ability to independently regulate our resources and protect our communities (NACSW 1998). Trade negotiations are now focusing on issues crucial to fisheries. The battle over agriculture around market access, domestic support and export subsidies will establish whether there is anything more to agriculture than just producing food for profit—in other words, whether food safety, food security and environmental sustainability will have any legitimacy (Barlow and Clarke 2000). These trade negotiations will set precedents that will readily apply to fisheries. Another important trade issue concerns intellectual property (TRIPS, or Trade in Intellectual Property)—for example the ability of corporations to patent life forms and indigenous knowledge, both of which are relevant to gender and fisheries. There are also crucial negotiations regarding trade in services that will affect the outlook for health, education, income support and other services in our communities. If these services continue to be privatized and if government policy is further restricted in these areas, rural communities and the poor will be especially at risk, and women will bare the brunt.

Challenges and Strategies for Action

It will take many people combining their pieces of the puzzle to operationalize this general framework for a gender analysis of fisheries in the context of globalization. Fisheries workers, non-government organization activists and university researchers can all contribute their knowledge and experience to this analysis. However, research is not an end in itself. The goal is to better understand the processes that are so dramatically affecting the women and men in fisheries communities, in order to improve their situation.

A global economy requires global analysis and action. Globalization delivers benefits to the corporate sector while increasing inequality and insecurity for the rest of society. National governments have less ability to set independent economic and social policy or regulate the market, and at the same time there is no international body to assume those responsibilities. Indeed, national governments have participated in setting up the institutional supports for the global market, through agreements like NAFTA and organizations like the WTO and the World Bank—and these, in turn, have tied their hands.

There is mounting resistance worldwide to the globalization agenda and the loss of democratic control, as can be seen in the public opposition and demonstrations organized in cities where multilateral agreement negotiations are going on. Many of the issues in fisheries communities—resource depletion, environmental degradation and loss of livelihoods in the wake of export-oriented development—are central concerns of this movement to alter the course of globalization.

International trade agreements will dramatically affect fisheries communities. Fisheries workers and researchers can contribute their experience and insights to the mounting opposition to these agreements. Many fisheries workers and researchers have worked nationally and internationally to challenge supply-side policies such as structural adjustment policies, privatization and deregulation, and to make international trade negotiations public beginning at the level of individual governments. We must continue the effort to resist a one-size-fits-all economic, social and environmental worldwide policy (Cohen 1999; NACSW 1998).

In addition to participating in these wider efforts to restrict the power of global capital to shape the world, we must strategize around specific policy issues related to fisheries and fisheries communities. We must bring gender concerns to the fore, whether it be about resource management regimes (How will women's access to the resource be affected?), occupational health policies (Are health hazards for women workers recognized in workers' compensation programs?), technology transfer or credit programs (Will women have access to these?) or government fisheries adjustment and income security programs. We need to decide how and where effective interventions can be made.

Fishery workers, activists and researchers from the North and South

have the chance to learn from each other. Pooling pieces of the puzzle from disparate communities leads to better understanding of gender, global fisheries and the situations of women and men in fisheries communities. Our future work on gender, globalization and fisheries communities will continue to reveal the destructive nature of globalization, its threats to sustainability and its erosion of non-market economic relations—issues that are important far beyond this industry.

Section Two

REGIONAL CASE STUDIES

Public Hearing¹

Nalini Nayak

At the end of September 2001 the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Kerala [India], organized a Public Hearing on "The Impact of Globalization on Women Workers in Kerala." This was one of several hearings organized by the National Commission for Women, Delhi, in an effort to understand, at first hand, the problems women workers face in different sectors of the economy and eventually to make necessary policy recommendations to the Central Government

SEWA is concerned about the numerous suicides and hunger deaths reported in the media. These deaths have occurred mainly in the plantation and small-farm sectors in Kerala, partly as a result of recent import-export policies that have caused a massive drop in prices, dragging small farmers into a debt trap and leaving them with little alternative but to surrender their lands to the banks.

Kerala's economy is based on its agricultural and traditional sectors like coir-making, cashew-shelling, fishing, transformation of forest produce, etc. Most of these sectors are in turmoil as a result of the New Economic Policy, the structural adjustment policies and the WTO-induced import-export policies. The majority of workers in these sectors are women.

There were women from four sectors that testified at this Hearing—from the plantation, farm and fish processing sectors and from the Cochin Special Export Processing Zone. This report concerns only what the women in the fish processing sector had to say.

The ICSF Women in Fisheries Programme, through the National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF), had, in 1996, conducted a Hearing on the problems of migrant women workers in fish processing plants in India. At that time, a majority of such migrant workers were from Kerala and worked under sub-human conditions in processing plants in distant areas. These plants undertook the entire gamut of processing activities, from procurement of shrimp to freezing, canning and export, and were not regulated.

Under pressure to regularize the sector, several of them have subsequently adopted the casualization and "putting out" policy. This means that they try to sub-contract as many of the processes as possible, in this case, the

actual peeling of the shrimp. Over the years there has been a rise in the number of shrimp peeling sheds in Kerala, where merchants with relatively small investments set up a shed, purchase shrimp in bulk and hire women to clean the shrimp. These merchants then sell the cleaned shrimp to processing plants.

This is what Sreedevi says about the way these sheds operate:

I have been cleaning shrimp ever since I was twelve years old as I needed money for the family and for my studies. I had to stop my education when I completed eighth standard and I went full-time into cleaning shrimp. At that time we went to the landing centre, sorted the catches and did some cleaning there itself. But about ten years ago these sheds came up in our village itself, as work in coir processing declined. Over the years the sheds have grown bigger. The owners keep changing either because they have made enough money and want to move on, or because they are incurring losses. We women just keep working. We are paid on a piece rate basis and receive no other benefits. Our present owner, who has been here for the past few years, used to give us 10 kg of rice at festival time but this year gave us only Rs50 [approximately US\$1.10] as a kind of bonus.

For cleaning a basin meant to contain 1.5 kg of shrimp—generally it is much more—we are paid Rs3. So on an average we can make Rs30 to 40 (less than one US dollar) a day. We work in permanently damp conditions, sitting in rows on our haunches. We do not use any gloves or boots. When there are bulk landings we work for twelve to fourteen hours non-stop, and there are several occasions when our fingers bleed, but as they are so numb we do not feel the pain until we go home at night. I generally soak my hands in a hot decoction of tea. This helps me to go back to work the next day. I need the work as my husband is only a casual worker, and we have no other means of livelihood. When my child was born, I stopped work for a few months and then my mother helped to care for the child. But there are several women who bring their babies to the work sheds and hang them in cradles outside so they can feed them when required.

Over the years we have created our own union to represent our case to the government. Not only do we lack any kind of job security and workers' benefits, we are not even considered as workers by the Fisherman's Welfare Board. We waged a long struggle last year and the Labour Officer—a woman—intervened. She made a good report about our actual working conditions, making a case for punitive action. But, rather than the government taking action based on her report, they transferred her. It became

clear that the owners of peeling sheds are better organized than we are and certainly have more political clout. We know that Kerala claims to be a progressive state where labour rights are concerned. However, the reality in our case is the opposite. There are thousands of women like me working in the hundreds of peeling sheds in my district. These peeling sheds also cause considerable pollution as they dispose of the contaminated water in common water bodies, leading to the spread of disease.

This year shrimp catches have fallen and several peeling sheds have closed down. We also hear that consignments of shrimp exported last year were returned to India as they did not pass the sanitary standards of the importing country. The owners try everything possible to maximize their profits but, in the end, it is at our expense.

Sreedevi's account sums up the problem in the processing industry quite lucidly. More and more women are being employed on a daily wage basis with no workers' benefits or job security. Labour laws are being modified to suit the new labour practices that favour the casualization of labour. All this will further facilitate the movement of work from northern countries to the South, where labour standards will be flouted at all levels.

Note

1. This article was first published in *Yemaya* 8, December 2001, a journal from the ICSF.

Fishing for Need and Not for Greed

Women, Men and the Fish Workers' Movement in India

Nalini Nayak

In India, marine fisheries contribute only 2 percent of the GNP but provide a livelihood for approximately 30 million people, half of whom are women. These people live along the country's 7,000 kilometres of coastline. The fish resource potential in the marine sector is estimated at 4.5 million tonnes.

Historically, India's tropical fish resources and related fisheries were highly diverse. Over the centuries, fishing technologies evolved in keeping with the marine ecosystem and the life of coastal communities. The social controls governing these communities determined access to the resource. Access was community-based, and regulations for harvesting resources differed between communities. Fishing was a skill handed down from father to son, and it was this traditional knowledge and skill that equipped the fishermen to venture out on the ocean, constantly inventing new ways of interacting with it. Skills of processing and marketing fish were passed down from mother to daughter, as it was the women who engaged in post-harvest activity. Communities also had their mechanisms for redistributing surplus from the fisheries to the elderly and disabled. Harvesting, processing and marketing fish were considered work that one did for need, not for greed.

Women in fishing communities had complex networks for fish distribution, selling in markets or from house to house. Their distribution networks and selling activity made fish a cheap protein accessible to widely dispersed rural populations. When catches exceeded immediate demand, women would salt and dry the fish, sometimes even extracting fish oil, thus preserving the catch for later use. Such processing also increased the value of the catch in times of bulk landings, facilitating transport to distant markets in the interior as well.

In some regions, women had direct access to the fish caught by their husbands. They took the fish to the market and sold it. The money would go towards running the household and covering the husband's fishing and other expenses. There were also women who sold fish on a regular basis to supplement the household income, bidding in auctions and buying fish on their home village beaches or travelling to distant landing centres to acquire fish for sale. In parts of the country where matriliney was the norm, women inherited the fishing equipment, and when a woman married, the husband came to live in her home and she had a right to her share of the catch, which she could dispose of as she wished (Nayak 1992).

India's fisheries have undergone a series of transformations that started with the colonial era but accelerated after World War II and are still occurring. These transformations have had profound consequences for lives and livelihoods, as well as for the marine ecosystems on which India's fishery communities depend. Consequences for women have been somewhat different from those for men, and gender relations have mediated the effects of the changes as well as being changed by them.

This chapter reflects on the impacts of modernization and globalization on life in India's coastal communities, on the gendered division of labour and on access to coastal lands, waters and food in the fisheries. It also explores the ways that women and men in India's powerful fish workers movement have responded to these impacts. It concludes by raising some issues critical to the future survival of artisanal fisheries.

Modernization, Globalization and India's Fisheries

Over the last forty years, Indian fisheries have experienced the boom-and-bust cycle that is the result of unsustainable development strategies. This cycle has been accompanied by violent inter-sectoral conflicts, with different groups and sectors vying with each other for resources. Persistent conflicts have occurred between the Indian state's interest in maximizing access to foreign exchange and coastal communities' interest in obtaining fish for food and livelihood.

Trade has always been a feature of Indian fisheries. Prior to 1930, exports comprised mainly sun-dried and salted fish and fish oil, but with the coming of ice, trade in fresh fish expanded. By 1985, India was the eighteenth largest exporter of fishery products in the world, the sixth largest among developing countries and the fourth largest in Asia (Kurien 1993). In the pre-independence period before the 1950s, trade was mainly with other British colonies, and India's fish trade suffered with the collapse of the British Empire. It picked up again after World War II, when prosperity in the U.S., Europe and Japan created new demand for animal protein and luxury seafood. Other factors contributed to the growth of India's fish exports after the 1950s. The foreign exchange crisis in the 1960s gave an impetus to fish exports, because production for export in this industry did not require large expenditures on imports of advanced technologies. In addition, when the 1973 oil crisis induced Japan to reduce its fishing fleet and import more fish from other Asian countries, India was quick to take advantage of this market. Between 1955 and 1965, the value of fish exports more than doubled, and from the late 1950s, fish exports grew about 4.5 percent per annum. By 1980, marine products accounted for 4 percent of all India's exports and were the fifth largest export item (Kurien 1993).

Starting in the early 1960s, major changes in harvesting, processing and transport technologies occurred with the expansion of fish exports. These include trawl fishing, freezing technology in processing and the development

of an ocean-going cargo fleet with cold storage capacity. Prior to 1960, demersal shrimp resources were harvested only seasonally, and some dried shrimp was exported, but trawling and freezing technology turned the shrimp fishery into a year-round, export-based industry. Before 1970, trawlers comprised only 2 percent of the Indian fleet, but by 1980, they were 60 percent (Kurien 1993).

This phase of industrialization was supported by large government subsidies. Faced with a crisis in its balance of payments in trade, the state identified shrimp as a potential foreign exchange earner, increasing subsidies to the sector and to the construction of infrastructure required for its development. These subsidies, along with the absence of effective regulation of access to the fishery, and increased landings, combined to ensure that the shrimp trawl boom lasted less than a decade. The shrimp fishery produced a large quantity of by-catch, and when shrimp catches started to decline, many other species also disappeared.

In the 1980s, large numbers of artisanal fisher harvesters began mechanizing and modernizing their vessels, using imported outboard engines, new beach landing crafts and new types of nylon nets. Although the outboard engines allowed the traditional crafts to travel faster and farther to more distant fishing grounds, they also added new costs to the fishing operations. Gradually, the amount of fishing gear increased to keep up with the cost of distant trips. Harvesting techniques became less diverse. The cost per unit effort of the fishing operations increased until, by the early 1990s, the Indian fishery was experiencing overcapacity. The government offered rehabilitation packages to the mid-water trawl sector in 1991 and 1992, but this failed to reduce the size of the fleet.

The by-catch of other species from the shrimp fishery entered local markets and was the first blow to the women who retailed regular catches of these species caught by artisanal fishers. Trawler fish was much cheaper, and the women had to compete with male merchants better equipped to transport fish in bulk in their own vehicles. The increased size of landings also put the women at a disadvantage and encouraged men with transport vehicles to move into the fish trade.

Local governments encouraged fishers to organize into cooperatives. They also financed the development of freezing infrastructure, and freezing capacity increased fourfold during the 1980s, spreading to all the maritime states. This contributed to the problems of women fish workers, particularly the vendors. As vessels became larger and landings were centralized, women's access to fish was eroded. With the liberalization of exports, other varieties of fish besides shrimp were included in the export basket and there was less cheap fish for local consumption. Competition increased the price of fish, and it was no longer supplied on credit. As a result, poorer women were excluded from the trade. The more enterprising women began to hire vehicles and travel sixty to a hundred kilometres daily to

other landing centres to obtain fresh fish for sale, while others went to neighbouring states to find dried fish. When the government began to make credit available for fishing, it accepted only the fisherman as the owner of the craft and gear, thereby weakening women's access to fish in the matrilineal areas (Nayak 1993). The government made no attempt to enhance or subsidize women's activity in the fishery.

Deep-sea fishing expanded in the late 1980s, and the Indian government again played a role in encouraging it, despite ample evidence of its destructive potential (Giudicelli 1992). The government's 1991 Deep Sea Fishing Policy accorded rights to foreign fishing vessels, allowing them access to the Indian EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) if they entered into joint ventures with Indian entrepreneurs. With inshore and midshore waters already over-exploited, catches declining and conflict brewing, this state-sponsored opening of Indian waters to foreign trawlers could not be justified.

The pressure for joint ventures was linked to developments in other parts of the world. The collapse of groundfish stocks in northern countries meant that these heavily subsidized fleets were seeking new fishing grounds and ways to transfer their burden of debt onto others. In India, a modern scientific lobby goaded the government to improve its industrial capacity. Structural adjustment programs imposed on India by the International Monetary Fund encouraged the development of joint venture agreements that came with a minimum of restrictions on the foreign fleets. Only vessel tonnage and the duration of the licence were specified, and agreements were for long periods, from four to six years. The fleets were free to harvest as much of whatever species they chose, regardless of the consequences for stocks, Indian harvesters and fishing communities (Kurien 1996b).

Intensive Shrimp Aquaculture and its Consequences

The 1980s and 1990s were also associated with the rapid development of state-supported intensive aquaculture. In the coastal states of West Bengal, Orissa, Kerala, Karnataka and Goa, tidal-based systems of extensive aquaculture, with no external inputs, traditionally produced between 15,000 and 20,000 tonnes of shrimp per annum. These shrimp provided a steady supply for the export processing industry. Shrimp filtration, as this was called, was intermixed with one season of paddy cultivation, which not only provided the local people with food and work but was also the base on which the shrimp survived in the following season.

Intensive aquaculture for shrimp started in India after it had already collapsed in other eastern and Southeast Asian countries, leaving in its wake irreparable environmental damage. Kurien (1996a) argues that state-sponsored intensive shrimp aquaculture resulted partly from the government's growing need for quick foreign exchange to finance International Monetary Fund loans and partly from the wider exposure of the Indian

economy to global markets in the post-1991 liberalization era. This opening up gave international industrial interests—keen to find markets for their product and process technologies—the opportunity to push corporate investors in India into shrimp aquaculture. A majority of the local investors had no experience with the fishery or aquaculture business. They were attracted by the promise of quick and large profits.

The Indian government fostered shrimp aquaculture by arranging quick and easy access to licences for establishing shrimp aquaculture units, offering liberal leases of government coastal lands and providing technical support, financial incentives, credit support and customs duty exemptions. The area under shrimp aquaculture doubled between 1990 and 1997, and production doubled between 1990 and 1994. However, it fell sharply after that, and by 1997 was below the 1990 level (Marine Products Export Development Agency 1997). The collapse was due to ecological disaster: the greed to maximize profits through intensive culture backfired, resulting in the spread of disease and the closure of many shrimp farms.

Cultured shrimp is fed with fish that would otherwise feed humans directly—the fish that is cheap protein for poorer consumers. In 1988, global shrimp aquaculture consumed 180,000 tonnes of fishmeal derived from an equivalent of 630,000 tonnes of wetfish weight. In 1997, the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) noted that the dramatic increase in shrimp production was making the production of fishmeal from dwindling supplies of wild marine fish a growing necessity (UN-FAO 1997).

The boom-and-bust nature of the shrimp aquaculture industry was another wrench in the lives of people living in coastal communities. In areas with extensive water bodies, shrimp culture entailed the privatization of those water bodies, restricting people's access and rendering hundreds jobless. The fencing off of new shrimp ponds meant that traditional land use rights and women's access to markets in the interior were jeopardized. The shrimp farms not only enclosed the common lands earlier accessible to people, but they also polluted the surface and ground water and turned fisher people into fish seed gatherers and wage workers. Shrimp lands, because of their high salinity, cannot be used for other agricultural production and have to be abandoned (Jesurethinam 1997).

The shrimp trawl fishery and shrimp aquaculture created some jobs for women in shrimp processing plants. Over the years, however, the situation of these women workers has grown increasingly precarious. Before the 1990s, only women from the coastal region of Kerala (a southern state) worked in the processing plants. By the early 1990s, more women were drawn from the southern districts of Tamil Nadu state, and by the mid-1990s, they were being recruited from the inland and upland areas of Kerala and Tamil Nadu as well. Although international quality control standards have forced the processing industry to modernize its treatment of fish and shrimp, in most cases the conditions under which women workers are

recruited and must work are reminiscent of the slave period. Labour contractors recruit young women and herd them off to processing plants sometimes two to three days' journey from their homes. They must live in crowded and unhygienic shelters. They work long hours, depending on the availability of the shrimp, and their freedom of movement is restricted. They are paid their wages at the end of the season after deductions are made for food, medication and other charges, and they are never sure of work for the next season (International Collective in Support of Fisheries (ICSF) 1995).

Although India's marine fisheries have been exposed to local and international trade for hundreds of years, the nature of contemporary international trade (shaped by World Trade Organization rules) and its relationship to local and national exchange are different from the past. Indian fisheries have been particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of globalization, because the liberalization of trade and investment has occurred in the absence of effective fishing regulation. Since the 1970s, the only regulations worth mentioning have been India's sovereign rights within its 200-mile EEZ and state-level marine fishing regulation acts, which can only apply to twenty-two kilometres out to sea along their coasts. Only eight of India's nine maritime states have enacted such legislation, and each of these demarcate the inshore zone differently. Decentralized management fits badly with marine ecosystems, because local boundaries are administrative and don't fit with the underlying ecology. Such administrative complexity together with a lack of political will to conserve marine resources have been major obstacles to the development of a national fisheries policy in India.

During the 1990s, liberalization, joint venture development and intensive shrimp aquaculture coincided with a process of political decentralization. While decentralization is usually presented as a means to democratize control and increase people's role in decision making, this administrative restructuring in India is having serious adverse impacts on local communities. Local bodies are responsible for providing more services than in the past and must generate greater revenues to keep these services in operation. One way they have done this is by taking over the commons and developing them. Powerful multinational corporations, no longer hampered by a complex national bureaucracy, can work through professional headhunters and managers to reach the local authorities and increase their receptivity to external investors. Decentralization, and the related atomization of local communities and ecosystems, poses particular risks to women. As local bodies are forced to take over management of social infrastructure such as daycare and health services, these are the first to be dropped when there is a financial crunch. The privatization of the commons affects the survival strategies of women who use the common grazing grounds for their cattle, the common water bodies for fish and water plants and the forests for firewood, not to mention spaces for meeting, recreation and public sanitation.

Indian fisheries began responding to international pressures long before the current phase of globalization. However, this phase has aggravated the need for subsidies, increased the reliance on exports and accelerated the pace of ecological degradation. Increased dependence on oil-based technologies has made the fisheries more import-dependent as well. Every phase of liberalization, particularly the structural adjustment programs introduced by the International Monetary Fund in the early 1990s, has contributed to increased costs for inputs and fluctuating prices for exports, making investments in fisheries insecure and contributing to demands for further subsidies from the state. Realizing that inputs into the marine fishery were not paying dividends, the state plunged into supporting intensive shrimp aquaculture as the best way to earn necessary foreign exchange. India's political process, characterized by a form of party politics that needs to develop banks of votes through nurturing party constituencies, has encouraged the reliance on subsidies as a way to retain fisher harvesters' electoral support. In their struggle for survival, fisher organizations, including cooperatives, community organizations and trade unions, have generally settled for economic concessions—more landing centres, export promotion and subsidies on fuel, vessels and gear. These concessions are perpetuating and deepening the fundamental problems in the industry.

Every step in the modernization of the fishery has had substantial impacts on coastal communities. While some fishers have benefited from modernization and have been able to afford the new investments demanded, many others have not. Increased seasonality in fishing, more migration and the proletarianization of some fish harvesters have forced women to increase their responsibility for their families and to seek alternative sources of income. They have gone to great lengths to protect their families, and much could be written about the coping strategies that women have used to sustain life in their communities (ICSF 1997a). The development of a national Indian fish workers movement was one of those strategies.

The Feminist Perspective in the Fish Workers' Movement

As active players in post-harvest activity in India's fisheries, women have always had a substantial and acknowledged presence in fisheries organizations. The regular use of the term fish worker, as opposed to the term fisherman, implies that, although there is a sexual division of labour between men and women in the fishery, they are all fish workers. Along some parts of India's coast, women have been the sole distributors of fish, making fishermen dependent on women to convert fish into money and to buy other food.

Fishing communities are distant from one another and from the centres of power. In the 1970s, despite their isolation, Indian artisanal fish workers began to organize. Spontaneous protests against the trawlers led to the

formation of the National Fish Workers' Forum (NFF) in 1978. The NFF demanded national legislation to regulate marine fisheries, but the national government delegated responsibility for regulation to the states, resulting in a patchwork of regulatory frameworks. It took over a decade of persistent struggle to get a trawl ban of forty-five days implemented in some states; others announced a closed season for three months (Delhi Forum 1987).

In 1989, the NFF organized the historic Coastal Ecological March with the slogan, "Protect Waters, Protect Life." This resulted in the mobilization of thousands of coastal people, primarily women, demanding the right to life and livelihood. During the Coastal March, protesters raised national fisheries issues and presented a comprehensive critique of development policies and patterns of industrialization, including nuclear energy (NFF 1989).

The NFF is more a mass movement—representing artisanal fish workers and poorer groups in the fishing community—than a professional organization. Unlike the politically affiliated fisheries unions, the NFF is an independent (non-party) union that has demanded the introduction of fisheries management and conservation measures in the coastal zone. It has also insisted on including women fish workers as beneficiaries of government programs. Whereas the achievements of the NFF have been the result of its mass mobilization strategies, the NFF has been unable to implement the gains it has achieved through its struggles and in the courts, precisely because it does not have a specific membership structure. For instance, a Supreme Court ban on purse seining, a ban on night trawling, an order that in Kerala all shrimp exporters should pay 1 percent of their turnover to the Fishermen's Welfare Fund and a Supreme Court order regarding the conservation of the coastal zone were all products of NFF struggles (NFF 1994, 1995 and 1996). These decisions have never been implemented.

The past few decades have seen increased conflict among fishery stakeholders, development of massive overcapacity and destruction of fish resources. State subsidies have kept the larger craft afloat while the small, coastal fishers who are not subsidized are being forced out of the fishery. The primary demand of artisanal fish workers has been a ban on trawl fishing, but women involved with the NFF have pursued other demands as well. In the early- to mid-1980s, these women began to demand transport facilities to get themselves and their fish to markets. They also sought controls on, or even exemption from, exploitative market taxes and access to better facilities in the marketplaces. In the 1990s, they advocated for access to fish landings in the centralized harbours and access to credit to finance their marketing work. More recently, they were successful in gaining access to the savings-cum-relief scheme of the government—a welfare scheme for the lean fishing months (NFF 2000).

As early as 1986–87, women who had worked closely with the community and the movement began to develop a feminist perspective on the fisheries.

They presented a gender analysis of fisheries modernization that highlighted both the violence caused to the resources by overly efficient harvesting technologies and the increasing violence within fishing communities directed primarily at women. This feminist perspective identified modernization as a patriarchal project leading towards greater centralization, monocultures and technologies that are only profit-oriented with no concern for conservation or for sustaining life and livelihood. It focused on the need to nurture life, be it on the land or in the sea, identifying nurture as unremunerated labour relegated to the private sphere and hence primarily women's responsibility.

The feminist perspective also challenged the linked assumptions about the neutrality of technology and the capacity of technology to solve every problem (technological utopianism). It identified violence as an integral component of modernization and women as its primary victim. The presentation's authors tried to build a case for shared responsibility for nurturing work among men and women, so that life and not profit would become central to their relationships. Within fisheries, a nurturing perspective implies respect for interdependencies in ecosystems and in life cycles of production, for harvesting technologies that are selective and diverse and for fisheries where the fish are used only as food for human consumption. A nurturing perspective also requires combining harvesting with efforts to regenerate the fish habitat destroyed by those harvests (Nayak 1997).

The NFF leaders were open to the perspective, not as a feminist perspective but because it emphasized conservation and was linked to demands for an alternative development strategy. Some efforts were also made to focus on the issues and problems faced by women in the sector and to strengthen women's spaces in the sector. However, the functioning style of the organization did not facilitate women's participation in the leadership, and prospective women leaders gradually withdrew. During this time (the mid-1990s), the movement was preoccupied with larger conflicts that sapped the energies of people and of NFF leaders. All along, women participated in and supported these larger struggles.

In 1993, the NFF began to address the issues of migrant women workers in processing plants. It organized a public hearing with the goal of ensuring that these workers were covered by labour legislation for migrant and contract workers. They argued that since the industry is 100 percent export-oriented and thus has to meet international standards in terms of product quality, the workers should be treated like other industrial workers and therefore receive appropriate wages and benefits (ICSF 1995).

The processing worker issues surfaced at a time when countries were debating whether or not to sign the Social Clause of the World Trade Organization, which called for international labour standards to be applied to workers in industries all over the world. The developing countries

believed that this would deprive them of their comparative advantage in trade. The national trade unions did not want issues relating to international trade to be subjected to the Social Clause; rather, they wanted national governments to guarantee workers' rights. In addition, fisher harvesters attributed their improved earnings to the fact that their catches of shrimp and fish were being exported. As a result, they did not want to jeopardize the export industry. The women processing workers were the losers.

Women Oppose Intensive Aquaculture

Local women reacted most strongly to the effects of intensive aquaculture on public coastal areas and to food supplies. On India's east coast, the state government leased public lands to the shrimp investors at the beginning of the 1990s—lands formerly used for community sanitation, fish drying, cattle grazing and similar activities. The leases took away women's rights to what were considered common lands. Seeing the promise of quick returns, the rice farmers in the low-lying estuarine areas invested in shrimp cultivation. When the bulldozers came in, and when, shortly afterwards, the drinking water from the wells became polluted, it was the women who reacted. This intrusion of investors into the coastal wetlands and food lands motivated women in the fishing and agricultural communities to create alliances and struggle to obtain state intervention to stop it (Jesurethinam 1997).

The backwaters on the southwest coast of India were also targeted for intensive shrimp culture. In these areas, traditional aquaculture (shrimp filtration) was the general practice, intercropped with paddy, the latter grown in the rainy months when water salinity levels dropped. The intercropping of shrimp and paddy was not only ecologically productive but also provided food and work for coastal communities. As these lands were gradually converted into shrimp farms, private property rights were established over the adjacent water bodies, where local fishermen had fished freely for decades and women had gathered clams and other shellfish for a livelihood.

Within a few years, the shrimp farms and the backwaters were infested with the Epizootic Ulcerative Syndrome (EUS) (ICSF 1992), a disease which polluted the entire water body and the fish within it. Local women reacted, demanding compensation.

Major struggles over intensive shrimp aquaculture, with women in the forefront, were waged around the country. As a result, in 1997, the Supreme Court called a halt to its development on certain parts of the coast. However, this path-breaking judgement has not been implemented, and attempts have been made to invalidate it through the Aquaculture Authority Bill. This Bill, instead of being a measure to enact the Supreme Court judgement to protect the ecologically fragile coastal environment and the traditional livelihood of the coastal people, proposed to give amnesty to all

the aquaculture industry set up since 1991. Thus, it was more an Aquaculture Development Bill (NFF 1998)

Whither the Coastal Fishery and Coastal Communities?

Since the signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the tourism industry has greatly expanded, and India has become even more open to foreign investment and the introduction of many industries that are highly polluting. The tourism boom and deregulated industrial expansion have been facilitated by the decentralization of political power introduced in the early 1990s along with structural adjustment programs. Both developments have wreaked havoc on the coasts and in coastal communities.

In the Indian context, with unemployment higher than 30 percent and underemployment even higher, where the government takes no responsibility to guarantee work and livelihood to its citizens, it is critically important to safeguard opportunities for self-employment and subsistence such as those in fisheries. More than 70 percent of the Indian population falls into the informal sector, and a large majority of those eke out a living from their traditional community access to natural resources. Modernization and globalization have made wild promises about the prosperity that will come out of the global economy. Whatever the benefits, these will accrue only to a small minority, with the large majority left by the wayside to fend for themselves.

These trends can be seen in today's fishing communities. A certain number of people have achieved prosperity and greater freedom as a consequence of modernization and increased integration into the global fisheries economy. But as increasing investments in fishing are associated with dwindling returns, some of these survivors are seeking better fortunes outside the fishery. But many people have suffered from these developments, and the fishery-dependent people who remain have few other options than to try to survive within the fishery.

Women's work and their survival strategies have contributed to the resilience of fishing communities (ICSF 1997b). Women have also provided the bulk of support for the movement to protect lives and livelihoods in the fisheries. It is they who turn out in large numbers when the broader livelihood issues are raised in the struggles. Yet, no real political will exists, either in the government or in the movement, to work towards the reorganization of the fishery in keeping with these women's demands. There is a gap between the life world of the community and the demands of the movement, almost as if the patriarchal project of development that motivates government also has deep roots in the movement, resisting any real attempts to change. And, recent developments in the movement suggest that this resistance may be increasing.

Earlier in the history of the NFF, several able and vocal women leaders in the movement were marginalized, and the NFF leadership would not

accept all-women unions as members. This gradually changed, and the movement began to accept a semi-autonomous women's federation as part of its structure. Recently, however, the leaders have begun to focus on the cultural (caste) dimension of the community. They have justified this shift based on the pretext that fish workers as a caste/community have to unite, forget all their professional differences and struggle together to get their share of mainstream development. The minute that caste identities are called into play, the old social and cultural norms that have subjugated women are also revived, and any attempt to raise feminist positions or to talk about an alternative development paradigm is jeopardized.

The current focus on cultural identities within the NFF is symptomatic of the more recent trend of post-modernism and its focus on the politics of difference. This trend highlights the need to assert cultural identities over and above class rather than exploring how they are mediated by class. The politics of difference has come to the fore with the current phase of globalization and its claim to promote decentralized democracy. This trend helps to capture the hopes of the marginalized and oppressed castes that see scope for emancipation in representative democracy. Unfortunately, however, globalization in its current form is promoting the collective sovereignty of a few countries, leading to the concentration of power in the hands of a few at the global level, thereby negating the power of the nation state. As argued by Vandana Shiva (1997a and 1997b), globalization is based on the globalization of corporate rights, not the globalization of corporate responsibilities. This creates an inverted state more committed to the protection of foreign investments than to the citizens and communities that make up the country. This enormous concentration of economic power can survive only with the growth of violence that is fuelled by social fascism—like the growth of Hindutva¹ in India. At the national level, identity politics of any kind can lead to fundamentalism and social fascism. Such a strategy, if not seriously thought out, will block all efforts to democratize power sharing and gender equality.

Are attempts to safeguard an Indian artisanal fishery, where women will continue to have their space and voice, thus doomed to fail? The answer is not simple, as there is no single alternative future for this fishery, but rather a variety of alternatives that will be location-specific. To survive, artisanal fish workers will find themselves continually struggling for control within the global fishery. Having experienced the crisis of overfishing, over-capitalization in the fishery and now the threat to life and livelihood of contemporary globalization, coastal communities have to make serious choices regarding the kind of society they want for themselves and their children. These choices will have to challenge the historical mistake of failing to recognize women's complementary activities in fisheries and build on the reliable body of knowledge, both traditional and modern, that now exists on key aspects of the oceans and fisheries, refocusing on *need* and not

on *greed*. Only truly democratic and participatory processes, which acknowledge the rights of the coastal communities to manage their resources, will lead to the survival of these communities and their marine resources.

Note

1. Hindutva is the ideology of the BJP party and its allies aspiring to make India a “Hindu nation” based on the majoritarianism

Shrimp Farms or Shrimps Harm?¹

Jasper Goss

Myths abound about how the farmed shrimp industry can alleviate rural poverty, as the case of Thailand shows. During the last two decades, shrimp aquaculture has become an increasingly important alternative to ocean-caught shrimp. By the late 1990s, roughly a quarter of the world's 2.5 million tonnes of shrimp came from farms, up from just one-twentieth in the early 1980s.

Globally, the farmed shrimp industry, which represents a substantial component of the increasingly important aquaculture industry, has often borne the brunt of criticisms, especially about environmental damage. In fact, whether from the North or the South, concerned NGOs have often, quite rightly, campaigned against the industry's negative impacts upon mangrove systems, its salinization of waterways and its transformation of coastal ecologies.

Shrimp farming in countries such as India, Indonesia, Thailand and Ecuador has developed because of the relative cheapness of coastal land, the poor regulatory frameworks governing land use and title, the eagerness of local and foreign elites to profit and the seemingly insatiable desire for shrimp among consumers in countries like Japan, the U.S. and the European Union.

Yet, what has been remarkably absent from much of the analysis of the shrimp industry is an assessment of the labour conditions in the industry. The boosters of shrimp farming, be they government agencies, multilateral banks or transnational corporations, wax lyrical about the benefits which accrue to shrimp farmers in the developing world. However, shrimp farm owners only constitute a small proportion of the total numbers of participants in the sector. Besides the industry's environmental impact, one must ask whether people have benefited from the increased opportunities for employment shrimp farming has created in rural areas?

A case study of Thailand might answer this question, apart from providing some background to the circumstances of the industry's development. Thailand became the world's leading exporter of farmed shrimp in the mid-1990s. It is also the home of the developing world's leading transnational agribusiness company, Charoen Pokphand, otherwise known as the CP Group. Thailand's shrimp industry grew through the co-ordinated efforts of the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the CP Group and Thai government agencies, all of whom helped construct an institutional and infrastructural framework to facilitate rapid expansion, minimal regulation

and maximum profits. Tax incentives, tariff-free technology imports, regional investment incentives, and export credits formed part of the generous packages offered to Thai and foreign companies setting up operations in Thailand's rural areas. Within a short time, factories were springing up in coastal rural areas to process the shrimp produced on surrounding farms. Each factory employed upwards of 2,000 workers.

More Jobs

Farms also became sites of employment, and in the ten years between 1985 and 1995, the occurrence of wage labour rose from 14 percent to 33 percent in all the farms. By the end of the 1990s, farmed shrimp generated over US\$1 billion in exports, although this was down from a peak of US\$2 billion in 1995. This made shrimp one of the most valuable of Thailand's exports and an industry central to the economy. One might think that this high value would lead to better conditions for those working in the industry, but one would be wrong.

Workers who are employed on farms are often locals whose previous occupations are no longer viable. For example, on the eastern coasts of southern Thailand, many shrimp farm workers were previously small-scale fisherfolk, who obtained most of their catch within the 3-km coastal zone. Shrimp farms, however, have caused significant pollution through the silting of tidal zones and the increased presence of organic matter. The net effect has been to reduce coastal fisheries and thus damage the possibilities for local fisherfolk, generally meaning they must seek alternative sources of income.

But making the move to working on a shrimp farm is not necessarily an advancement. First, most shrimp is grown over a four-month period, with a one- or two-month break in between each crop, during which there is no employment. Second, continuous wages during the crop depend on successful harvests, and with the very high rates of crop loss in the industry, there are no guarantees of income. Third, the rates of bankruptcy at the farm level are very high, and there is often little security of employment, with workers often changing farms every year.

More importantly, even if all the right conditions are met and there is a good harvest, farm workers, if their incomes were to be spread out over a single year, would not even receive Thailand's legal minimum wage (about US\$4 a day). However, the main source of employment generated by the shrimp industry is in the large processing factories. Rather than "liberating" people through wage labour, these factories can actually reinforce existing inequalities, as well as create new ones.

The factories are industrial plants whose workforce is entirely female. The work conditions involve standing all day, with workers having to seek permission to go to the toilet. Management of the factories is quite clear on the reasons behind the all-female labour force: they are cheaper than male

workers. While workers generally receive the minimum wages, they must pay for their own transport to the factories. There are no unions, overtime is compulsory, all hiring is casual and there are no employment guarantees.

New Opportunities

Those supporting the industry have argued that by employing women, the factories are, in fact, giving women an income they once never had and are allowing them to pursue new opportunities. Yet this is only one side of the story. Surveys done at the factories have found that around two-thirds of the women are married, with children. The immediate consequence of their employment is not greater freedom but actually a reinforcement of the gendered division of labour which expects women to perform child-rearing duties and provide additional family income.

None of this takes into account the undocumented workers whose position within the farmed shrimp industry is even worse. In southern Thailand, there are factories where Burmese workers are housed in locked-in conditions (that is, they can not leave the factory premises), where average wages are half the legal minimum and where strike activity has been met with violence and harassment.

Clearly, the picture of employment in the farmed shrimp industry in Thailand is not one of simple improvement in people's livelihoods. There are complex and contradictory issues at play. Yet, it is obvious that new forms of exploitation have emerged. In an industry where significant export revenues and profits have accrued to transnational companies, such as Charoen Pokphand and Mitsubishi, and to local elites, it is time that attention is drawn to the means by which such wealth can be redistributed more equitably. While the environmental impact of shrimp farming will continue to garner campaigns and protests, the conditions and future of the shrimp industry's workers should now be of equal concern to interested parties.

Note

1. This chapter was originally published in *Samudra* 26, August 2000, a journal from the ICSF.

Proud To Be a Fishworker¹

Excerpts from an interview with Joana Rodrigues Mousinbo, president of the fisher harvester's colonia of Itapissuma in Pernambuco, Brazil, by M.G. Indu of ICSF's Documentation Centre at Chennai:

I was born in the city of Itapissuma. I belong to a family of fisherfolk and I started fishing at the age of eight. The women's group I work with began in 1975 with the help of the church. This group started very small, but we all realized we had to defend our rights as fishworkers.

We did not have licences to fish like the men and that was basically our main issue. Today we women fishworkers have licences. This was the first place in the whole of Brazil where women were given fishing licences and recognized as fishworkers, just like the men.

I was elected as president of the *colonia*. In the beginning it was very difficult because most of the men believed that the position of a woman was behind the stove or behind the sink washing clothes. Now I am very happy with my work in the *colonia*, I am well accepted and many people support me. I fish shrimps, oysters, different types of shellfish and I am very proud to be a fishworker.

I do what I can to defend the rights of the fishworkers and the shellfish gatherers. The *colonia* now has about 2,225 members—1000 men and 1225 women. They are registered in the national welfare system. Today we have 810 women fishworkers who have retired and receive retirement benefits. Women fishworkers also get maternity allowance and an unemployment allowance during the off-season for shrimp. We also have social security in case of accident or death, and I believe that we women have great advantages in the fisheries sector.

And it is mostly the women who pay the *colonia* dues for themselves and also for their husbands who often do not give their payments on time.

It is not easy to administer this *colonia* with more than 2000 registered fishworkers, and also other fishers who are not registered but still have the same problems. It has not been easy administering this group, and to also be a fishworker, a mother and grandmother.

Earlier, I was the president of the Federation of Fishers of the state of Pernambuco. I was elected but I did not like it. I was the first woman to be elected to this position. It was very complicated. All the presidents of *colonias* were men. They were even upset with me when I went to a meeting in Brasilia with the Ministry of Environment. They thought that I was not supposed to go and that I wouldn't be capable of doing the job.

At present there are at least three women presidents of *colonias* in Pernambuco. There are also women who hold positions such as secretary and treasurer so that is an advancement for women. So in this sense women have taken a very big step towards improving their rights and that of fish workers in general in the movement.

Women fishworkers collect crabs, mussels and other shellfish and take these to the beach to sell. They also make and repair fishing nets and sometimes help to repair boats. They participate in the meetings of the community, besides the ones of the *colonia*, and they also take care of the house, the children and the fishermen, besides doing the other chores of the house like cooking, cleaning, gathering firewood and washing the clothes. They may also wash clothes for other people to get extra income.

Sometimes women bring in more income than their fishing husbands. The women actually go out and capture the fish and they themselves are the ones who go and sell it. By way of comparison the men go fishing on boats which are not theirs using tools which are not theirs and they have to then share with the owner of the boat and the net. Some therefore take very little home. This is not in all the cases, just in some. In theory, if every fisherman had his own boat and his own net, he would bring home more income.

Women do not do any fishing in the open sea. Our area is the estuarine mangrove area. We mostly work inside the estuary, and the problem we have is the destruction of the mangrove habitat, as a result of shrimp aquaculture projects.

Since most of the women are single mothers and get their daily meals from the mangroves, this destruction is directly affecting the women. So the women know that they have to struggle and go after these issues because that is what their livelihood depends on.

Another big problem that we have is the use of explosives for fishing where all the fish are blown up, eliminating every single species in our area. Today we do not have as many fish as we used to probably due to this pollution and the use of explosives.

Another threat that we are confronting is that our small community of about 20,000 inhabitants has been trampled by tourism. We have the Santa Monica channel which is so beautiful and there are many mangroves. This attracts many tourists who come in jetskis and high speed boats. These often get entangled in our nets and destroy them. We had an accident where one of these high speed boats hit a fisherman and killed both him and his fourteen-year old son, except that the owner of this boat was not prosecuted because he is a very rich and powerful man. So the case is unresolved.

However, we do not hang our heads low but fight for our rights. We now have the help of other persons who enforce our struggle for fish worker's rights in this area.

I have a grandchild who is five years old. Before coming here the TV network "Rela Global" interviewed me about the mangroves, and my

grandchild told me that he had seen me on TV. He was very excited. I told him he should not be excited about being on a TV because this is a struggle and you only achieve things when you struggle for them and you have to start when you are little to fight for things that you will achieve later.

What I would like to tell the other women is that they should keep their heads high, they should not let go of their struggle and should be strong and fight for their rights that they have as fishworkers, just like any fisherman!

Note

1. This chapter was originally published in *Yemaya* 4, August 2000, a journal from the ICSF.

Identities in Construction and in Conflict

Restructuring and the Social Roles of Women in the Fishing Communities of Pará State, Brazil

Maria Cristina Maneschy and Maria Luzia Álvares

This chapter describes the social roles of women in the coastal communities of Pará state, Brazil, and explores the effects on these women of contemporary structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in the fisheries sector. An overview of the historical context is followed by a description of women's labour in contemporary fisheries, in community spaces and in the fish processing plants of Belém, the capital city of Pará. Traditional women's roles structure women's daily routines as they carry out unpaid domestic labour in households and communities. In contrast, their roles in the fisheries are somewhat transitory: within households they are partners in the sexual division of labour, whereas in the fishing industry, they need to find ways to insert themselves into the social division of labour. Their paid work is carried out in both the domestic and extra-domestic spheres, but there are no internal or external mechanisms for granting them identities as fisherpersons or fishery workers. This contributes to their exclusion from social security programs and their lack of access to the full benefits of citizenship, making them particularly vulnerable to contemporary SAPs. These women have recently mobilized to form associations, drawing upon new government training and credit programs directed at popular groups. Their associations create demands and spaces for collective activities, introducing new roles for women. Thus, while the strength of women's traditional roles contributes to the invisibility and instability of their work in the fisheries sector—and to their vulnerability—recent social processes are inducing them to seek better living conditions and to increase their participation in public life.

The Historical Context

The coastal region of Pará state is located in one of the oldest areas of colonial occupation in the Amazon region. It is an area with a long fishing history. The Paraense northeast was occupied in the seventeenth century with the founding of Belém and other communities. These began as indigenous villages organized by missionaries or as stopping places for land and sea travellers between Belém and São Luiz, the two most important cities in the northern part of Brazil during much of the colonial period. Fishing activities along the coast supplied fish to Belém residents. In order to protect this supply, “royal fisheries” were established on certain sections

of beaches, where fishing was prohibited to common people and the fish produced was shipped to Belém. The longest-lasting royal fishery was the Marajó Island fishery, said to have existed until 1840 (Baena 1839; Furtado 1987).

After 1850, the growing demand for rubber in European and American industries brought changes to the northeastern part of Pará state. British capital and technology were used to build the Bragança Railway, which opened up the interior of the Paraense northeast to settlement by thousands of farming families. In order to develop the fishing sector and meet the growing urban demand for fish, the government provided loans and tax exemptions to companies. By the 1890s, companies were building government-subsidized ice plants in Belém. The plants boosted trade between the coastal settlements and the capital city. Subsequently, merchant-owned “ice vessels” (*geleiros*) reached these outlying fishing zones. The merchants dealt directly with the fishers or with local dealers using the traditional, commercial *aviamento* relationship, in which goods were supplied in exchange for exclusive rights to supplies of fish.

In the 1960s, the government built a network of roads connecting the region to the rest of the country in response to the needs of the industrial complex in the centre-south for new markets and new raw materials supplies. The roads reduced travel time and distance between the centre-south and Pará, enabling fish buyers to increase their presence in the fishing ports on the coast. The result was a period of intense fish trading that encouraged specialization and class formation among fishers (Furtado 1987; Loureiro 1985; Mello 1985).

Prior to the 1960s, the population in the coastal cities engaged in occupational pluralism, combining agriculture, fishing and other extractive activities. Full-time fishing was seasonal, confined to the seasons of species in demand by the market (Furtado 1987). The road network encouraged the spread of powerboats and drift nets, further contributing to the expansion of the fishing sector. Many families of fisher-farmers migrated to fishing ports and began to live primarily on income generated from fishing (Furtado 1987; Loureiro 1985) and the harvesting of crabs in mangroves along the coast. By the 1970s, thousands of people were employed in these activities in cities such as Vigia, São Caetano de Odivelas and Bragança (Maneschy 1993). Some centres, such as Outeiro, Mosqueiro, Marudá and Salinópolis, and more recently Ajuruteua, became popular tourist destinations for people from the state capital. Over time, employment linked to the inflow of tourists came to equal or surpass that created by the fisheries. Demand increased for housekeepers, gardeners, domestic servants, construction workers, caretakers, bartenders, snack bar operators, street vendors and similar workers.

In the late 1960s, industrial fishing was introduced into the state of Pará. Many companies came from the southern region of the country (Diegues

1983). The move to the north was stimulated by the introduction of tax and other financial incentives to attract capital investment and by the construction of the road network. The national policy of developing fishing activity was directed at promoting fish exports. The industrial, export-oriented fishing effort tended to concentrate on such species as shrimp, *piramutaba* (a catfish) and, more recently, lobster (Diegues 1983; Mello 1985; Penner 1984).¹ Contiguous and overlapping fishing areas for trawlers and the artisanal fleet generated fishing conflicts which, in combination with objections to dumping and discarding on board trawlers, have been the focus of study and debate (Loureiro 1985; Mello 1985).

Today, Pará state ranks first in Brazilian fish production. A 1988 report of the now-defunct SUDEPE (Superintendência do Desenvolvimento da Pesca, or Superintendent for the Development of Fishing Activity) estimated that there were 100,000 fishermen in the state, 55,000 of them in the coastal cities (Siqueira 2002). The 1995 census of the fishing fleet by CEPNOR (Centro de Pesquisas Pesqueiras do Norte do Brasil, or Fishing Research Center of Northern Brazil) reported about 3,500 fishing vessels in fourteen coastal cities, highlighting the importance of this sector (CEPNOR 1996, 1997 and 1998). Outside the state capital, small-scale fishers have limited access to unloading and storage infrastructure and are thus compelled to sell everything they catch immediately. In the main fishing areas, they face not only the theft of their nets, especially at night, but also competition from the industrial fleet. Despite the importance of fisheries, agriculture is usually considered more important in the region, with fishing seen as a secondary activity. The lack of fishery data and sector-oriented development policies, either municipal or state-wide, is partly responsible for this view of fishing as secondary.

Gender and Fisheries in Pará State

In an article on gender relations in the fishing communities of Brazil, Motta-Maués discusses the relationship between universal, or supposedly universal categories—such as “fisherman” or “fisherwoman”—and (following Geertz) the categories associated with “local knowledge frameworks” (Motta-Maués 1998). Motta-Maués notes the recurrence in ethnographic data of local gender constructions in which male and female occupational domains are clearly separated. This is highlighted by the many special names given to women engaged in fishing activities and agriculture including, for example, *pescadeiras* (fish harvesters), *marisqueiras* (fish harvesters) and *trabalhadeiras* (agricultural workers). Motta-Maués highlights the need to study these “native categories and find out what they can tell us about the people, their relationships and their social world” (1998: 394). These categories are symbolic dimensions of social realities, and exploring them can contribute to our understanding of such social phenomena as the relations between the sexes.

Recent research in the Amazon region reveals that women's work has always been central to the fishery. Their work has involved direct, fishery-related activities, as well as work in areas such as agriculture and handicrafts, to generate alternative sources of income for fishing families (Alencar 1991, 1993; Álvares 2001; Furtado 1987; Manesch 1995; Motta-Maués 1994). In the past, female participation in fishery-related work took place mainly within the family unit. Women went fishing along the coast for home consumption or sale; they manufactured and repaired fishing gear belonging to relatives; and they processed fish (salting and drying) prior to sale. After the expansion of the road network and the growth of trade in fish products, women moved into paid work in gear manufacture and fish and crab processing. From the beginning, the industrial processing sector has made wide use of female labour. However, the work that women do in fishing communities has features that tend to exclude them from the established definition of fishery workers, thereby influencing their class-consciousness, incomes and working conditions.

Women make up roughly 10 percent of fish harvesters, participating in several different fisheries that operate close to shore, such as the seasonal fisheries for *siris* and mussels. It is common for women to use fixed traps at the edge of the sea that do not require them to be absent from the home for long periods of time. This is the case with the traditional *matapis* (small trap) shrimp fluvial fishery, which is very common throughout Pará state. The wives of fishermen often fish daily for shrimp with the help of their children. This fishery helps them to provide food for their families while their husbands are away fishing. In some areas of the coastal zone, fishing is carried out using fishgarths (*currais*), or large traps. *Currais* are difficult to build and maintain. Women do not operate these traps on their own, participating instead in work teams composed of relatives, on which they work at certain points in the process, including the daily fish harvesting during low tide and the cleaning of fishgarth poles.

On land, women participate in the tourism sector, working primarily as housekeepers in paid domestic service and in small businesses (Álvares 2001; Manesch 1995). Studies carried out in areas near the mangroves indicate that women also work part-time processing crabs and mussels. This processing is known locally as *catação*. Dealers buy the product from the fishers and pass it on to women workers, who generally work at home, although some are also employed in small *catação* establishments owned by the dealers. The product goes to supermarkets and restaurants in regional cities, mainly to the state capital. A portion is also exported to other Brazilian states (Cardoso 2000).

The wives and daughters of fishing families also participate in net weaving. Traditionally, this net weaving helped the families to acquire new nets or repair older ones. Investors took advantage of this practice in the 1970s when the use of drift nets manufactured with synthetic fibres became widespread. In cities such as Vigia, São Caetano de Odivelas, Bragança and

Belém, vessel owners began ordering large quantities of nets from local net weavers, who were paid according to the number of fathoms woven. These net weavers (*tecedeira*) are normally relatives of boat owners and crewmembers, but some are non-relatives hired by people who act as intermediaries (Escallier and Maneschy 1996; Maneschy and Escallier 2002).

Women also work on processing lines in the industrial fish plants. Their work is both similar to, and different from, the other fishery work carried out by women in Pará state. The main difference is that this work takes place outside the domestic sphere and is regulated by contractual labour relations. However, regulations are more likely to apply in the case of plants in the capital city than in those located in the interior.

The invisibility of women and their work in the fishery is similar to the situation in agriculture in many parts of Brazil, in which women also do not see themselves as workers. In order to understand women's work from a gender perspective, it helps to think in terms of social roles, or typical behaviour and action expectations, which are defined for social actors by cultural standards linked to their position in the social framework. This approach draws attention to the social values governing women's behaviour, values which guide and limit their actions. For Brazilian women in fishing communities, the weight of traditional expectations is significant. These expectations relate to "key roles" (Cebotarev 1984) and to the fact that certain activities are strongly associated with particular roles, so that "the actors are not totally free to interrupt certain activities and engage in others, because this would mean new roles and, consequently, social transformations" (Cebotarev 1984: 46). Key roles determine how people organize their time. Social actors will distribute their time in ways that tend to enhance specific activities related to their key roles.

The roles of mother and wife are generally the key roles for Latin American women in rural communities (Cebotarev 1984). Extra-domestic labour may take place inside or outside the domestic space and can include service sector work, garment-making, baking, working as maids or housekeepers and working in agriculture. Where women combine domestic work and work for pay, one result is the double day of labour. When women identify their roles as wives and mothers as their key roles, these activities tend to be considered mandatory and non-transferable. Paid work activities are assessed partly in relation to the extent to which they complement key roles, supporting rather than conflicting with them. This distinction is essential to an understanding of the identities and work experiences of women in the fishing communities of Para state.

Women's work in fishing communities is characterized by the diversity of tasks in which they are engaged. Alencar (1993) found that fishermen's work has a single focus, that of fishing, whereas the work of women has multiple foci, combining periods of reproduction—care for the family and home—with periods spent generating cash income, producing foodstuffs

and, in some cases, manufacturing and repairing the gear of fishing relatives. Women's work is also characterized by discontinuity. All of these features contribute to the invisibility of women's paid work and hinder the emergence of class-consciousness among women workers in fisheries.

Although they are seen as "helpers," women's work is essential to meeting the immediate requirements of fishing families. The poorer women with limited education typically engage in the activities described above. Their paid work helps fishermen and their families cope with the seasonality of fisheries and with the effects of poor trips with low earnings.

With the partial exception of women in the industrial fish plants, fishery work for women is temporary and informal, important to the industry but largely invisible and treated as an extension of domestic work. Women's access to work and the nature of their work are affected by fishing and its consequences (such as resource degradation), by changes in market demand and by developments in other sectors (such as the expansion of tourism in coastal areas).

Social Policies and Qualified Citizenship

Mending or weaving nets, fishing close to shore, crab fishing in mangroves, carrying out pre- and post-fishing chores, working on small rural properties, rice harvesting and other similar activities are not clearly defined as productive labour. Unlike work in industry or the public sector, these activities are generally performed at no specific time or location and are sometimes unpaid. Although the direct and indirect links between these tasks and the production of wealth can be sociologically identified, in both local and larger-scale representations, this work becomes invisible when it is classified as "domestic labour."

Professional fishermen reinforce the gendered distinction between work carried out at home, with or without specific payment, which is considered female activity, and their own work, which is longer lasting and has predominantly economic objectives. This is reflected in the fact that acceptance into most of the fishing *colônias*—the fishers' union at the municipal level—is left up to the good will or discretion of the leader, who decides whether to designate women as members or as only their husbands' dependants. This matters, because in Brazil, membership in a professional association of fishers is one of the criteria of eligibility for social security benefits. Although limited, these benefits are important public resources.

The employment records of many women workers reflect the impact of job losses from company downsizing, pregnancy, childrearing and caring for sick relatives. The absence of public services and the limited extent of social programs to reduce the burden of family care often cause women to leave their jobs, when this is possible, or look for alternative sources of income that fit better with their key role responsibilities.

Access to social security assistance in the event of sickness and old age

could mitigate the social costs of women's traditional roles and guarantee them benefits from public service. However, the historical origins of the welfare system are rooted in social victories and relatively new processes in the formation of capitalism. The social security system was shaped by the "new wage relationship" associated with Fordism. This wage relationship brought with it the right of "access to social property and public services" (Castel 1998: 418). According to Castel, redistributive social security mechanisms (e.g., funds for retirement, illness and accidents) were created to help stabilize labour relations in societies of producers and mass consumers.

Initially, gaining access to this social property was linked to requirements that were more characteristic of the situation of male workers in big industries or urban areas than of women's work or rural labour in general. In the Brazilian case, rural workers were involved in such diverse labour relations and social conditions that they were unable to obtain social security until long after urban workers had done so, and even then, to a more limited extent. In the 1988 Constitution, fish harvesters and other rural groups were classified as "special social security pensioners" of the Brazilian Social Security System. Men can retire at age sixty and women at age fifty-five. The workers' movement, and pressure from workers' entities and non-governmental organizations within the Constitutional Assembly, resulted in these victories (Campos 1993; Diegues 1995).² More recently, in specific situations, fishers became eligible for unemployment insurance during interruptions in fishing activity due to spawning seasons. In order to qualify, they must prove their status according to well-defined criteria. This and other features of the social security statutes tend to marginalize women fishery workers.

The majority of women in the coastal communities of Pará state have never had formal work experiences with social security coverage. Those who work in the large fish plants, particularly in the capital city, are one exception. However, the companies that own these plants have begun to change hiring practices for both male and female labour by increasing outsourcing and selling parts of the fleet to former boat commanders and to workers' cooperatives, some of which supply female labour for the processing lines. This restructuring may jeopardize even these women's access to social security.

Gender, Restructuring and Work

Changes in the fishing industry in the 1990s have affected women's work opportunities and the gendered division of labour. The industrial fishery has been experiencing difficulties caused by stock depletion, related fleet collapse (Barthen 1990) and the end of the federal government's tax exemptions. According to the Fishing Industry Union in the states of Pará and Amapá, the crisis is due to the following factors: aging fleets, lack of capital, exchange rate imbalance, high interest rates, heavy social costs,

competition in the national and international markets and, finally, lack of fisheries research (SINPESCA 2000). These problems have contributed to bankruptcies and corporate mergers, as well as to the introduction of new forms of employment. Downsizing and out-sourcing through cooperatives, which supply labour, are examples of strategies that companies have been using to protect profits in this sector and to continue accessing export market products in the new context. They have also begun renting their boats to fishers who then have no labour rights and whose incomes depend entirely on landings. Irregular cooperatives that are not eligible for labour or social assistance have also been established (Petreire and Amaral 2000).

One of the characteristics of women's work in contemporary processing plants is high turnover (Diegues 1983; Mello 1985). Silva (1999) analyzed the occupational trajectory of women workers in Belém and found that fluctuations in the volume of product unloaded and the periodic ban on shrimp fishing on the northern coast of Brazil instituted a few years ago resulted in fluctuations in the number of workers taken on and laid off. Her survey also found that restructuring in processing plants has brought more fluid types of labour contracts. The number of regular workers (hired pursuant to the Brazilian Consolidated Labour Laws) has declined, whereas the number of temporary contracts, including those for daily workers, has increased. Out-sourcing of processing work has become a common practice. Similar findings emerged from 1996 research in a processing plant in Vigia (Maneschy and Escallier 2000).

Women plant workers are expected to work overtime when boats are full. High turnover rates and casualization are devices that enable companies to avoid bearing the fixed costs of the workforce when there is no raw material or when market demand is low.

Changes are happening in women's work in other fishery sectors as well. The following statements of net weavers highlight the contemporary reality of their work environments: informality of contracts, low and floating prices for their product, a gap between the supply of weavers and the demand for their product and the absence of an organization to regulate their working conditions. In recent years, many boat owners have begun buying factory-produced nets rather than ones made to order by local women.

I have woven nets since I was nineteen. I started when I got married. Before that, I made *tarrafa*, *puçá*, the small shrimp nets for my father.³ ... Thick nets I started doing with my husband. The first time they were for a man in downtown Vigia. He made the order for some people in Belém. He paid by the fathom, as they do today. He gave us kilos of nylon. In the beginning my husband didn't like it because he'd arrive home and lunch wasn't ready. ... But then he got used to it. This helped a lot, especially with our daughters. Now, when there are no orders, it affects us.⁴

Today, most people buy nets that are ready-made. I always ask around for orders. Now, my daughters also make nets to help out. It is a problem when we don't have any work.... My activities outside the house are net weaving and washing clothes. Washing is heavy work. I quit because I got sick, because of all the children I had.⁵

The last time it was R\$0.50 a fathom, after insisting with the man.... It's difficult to get a net to make.... [T]here are other women, many want the job. If we got together to talk about the price, it would help. Even so, my mother-in-law is working for R\$0.30 a fathom.⁶

We do it because we need it, because there isn't another job. That's why we get it to weave. But if we had to live on it, we couldn't.... I got this net, but I also have two sets of laundry to do. I only weave in the breaks between the washing.⁷

I'm going to weave slowly. I heard they don't have any money to pay us. A neighbour of mine asked for her pay and they didn't have it.⁸

The social and political invisibility of women in fisheries, their lack of formal status and the changes in their work associated with recent restructuring in the industry are dynamic processes that are locally produced and reproduced. Links between local and global processes and the influence of social movements shaped by feminist perspectives can encourage the re-examination of social roles, creating space for change. However, analyses of such change must take into account the local categories and classifications of the social actors. When we analyze the work of men and women to reveal the interconnections between their lives and the framework of economic and political domination into which they are inserted—and as we extend the definition of fishery work to include the roles of women—we cannot ignore the fact that “local knowledge” continues to be produced and reproduced.

Identity, Social Security and Mobilizing for Change

Women are not recognized as workers by the social security system or by the institutions that control and inspect fishery activities. This situation has only recently become a topic of discussion in fishing organizations in the Amazon region and the Brazilian northeast. The rural workers' union movement and, particularly, the development of a feminist movement in rural areas have contributed to a reformulation of the status of women rural workers in Brazil. These are signs of changes that are challenging established definitions and formal records related to the social role of women in fishing communities. On the one hand, the concrete situation of families that depend on fishing acts to bind women to their traditional roles, while on the

other hand, current changes favour the emergence of new forms of collective organization in coastal communities. How can women reconcile their old and new roles; their old and new identities?

Over the past five years, women have created their own formal and informal organizations in several coastal cities and fishing communities. These are linked to a broader range of community organizations that have formed to search for alternative sources of income and take advantage of the incentives offered by public programs supporting income-generation, credit and training. The growth of these women's organizations has also been supported by the National Fishermen's Movement (Movimento Nacional de Pescadores) and other non-governmental organizations. Álvares and Maneschy (1997) analyzed the initial organization of some of these women's groups. In the coastal cities of Pará, data was collected on four of them, all of which are pursuing ways to generate income for the families of their members. These groups face considerable challenges, including the lack of awareness of the importance of women workers, the need for education and the lack of access to markets for the economic alternatives they intend to introduce.

The Association of Women of the Fishing Industry (Associação de Mulheres da Pesca) in Cachoeira village, in São Caetano de Odivelas, was founded in 1996 by a group of women, some of whom have caught crabs in the local mangroves, worked in family small rural properties and are married to fishermen. Since its formation, this group has participated in courses through the Professional Education Program and has been granted small bank loans for the manufacturing of nets through the Productive Credit (Crédito Produtivo) Program, directed by the state government. The Association is struggling to survive: they buy raw material in small quantities from a dealer in a neighbouring city who is also the main buyer of their products, with negative consequences for the prices they receive for those products.

In some cases, former Mothers' Clubs (Clube de Mães) have become associations in order to ensure that women are eligible for training programs and to gain access to project funding. Mothers' Clubs are groups of housewives who meet in the communities and are frequently linked to the church movement. One such association, the Women's Association of the Baía do Sol Fishing Colônia, was established in 1998 (Álvares 2001; Lima 2000). Their original Mothers' Club was started in 1980 with support from the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Enterprise of Pará State (EMATER/PA), which promotes extension courses in rural communities. Local women had been resenting the shortage of options for them to generate income to supplement family incomes in a situation of increased poverty caused by the introduction of powerboat fishing in the 1970s. The Mothers' Club created a significant women's network organized around course scheduling and planning, childcare demands, recruitment of new members and the need to

attract enough community women to the courses to meet minimum enrolment requirements. The Club provided the organizational basis for women's access and the completion of the projects, but it also became a medium for bringing information to women and for transferring their aspirations to government, thereby challenging the status quo.

In many Brazilian communities, the Mothers' Club movement was the first to enable housewives to organize and demand better living conditions. This was the situation in Baía do Sol. As a result of this experience, some women organized themselves within the Z-9 Fishing Colônia as the Women's Association of the Baía do Sol Fishing Colônia and have begun explaining to community residents the benefits and obligations of the social security system for fishermen and fisherwomen. In 2000, with the support of the Pastoral Fishing Council (Conselho Pastoral de Pescadores) and the Group of Feminist Studies (GEPEM) linked to the Federal University of Pará State, a course on fish net manufacturing was held in Baía do Sol for young people.⁹ The chairwoman of the Women's Association is working to register the greatest possible number of men and women with the Fisheries Department, a legal requirement for engaging in fishing activity in Brazil and for registering with the social security system.

In another community, the Marudá village, there are two associations of women. One is the Erva Vida group, which had twenty-seven members in 1999.¹⁰ Their most wide-ranging project has been the production of traditional medicinal remedies, with technical assistance from professionals in the state capital. This work has two objectives: to collect and enhance local knowledge of the use of medicinal plants to compensate for lack of access to the public health system; and to generate income for women to increase their autonomy and self-esteem. Erva Vida has also initiated a project involving painting fabric and ceramics. The other group is the Association of Women of the Marudá Fishing Zone. Its members were originally part of Erva Vida, and it has the support of the local religious women's order linked to the Pastoral Fishing Council. The Association also produces medicine, but in 1998 it was encouraging women to register with the fishing colônia as well.

These associations have started to obtain information and the legally required documents to qualify for social programs for both themselves and their husbands. In the process, over the past five years, they have developed new forms of political participation. Paradoxically, recent policies have fostered such associations while simultaneously requiring that they have the knowledge, practices and experience needed to deal effectively with the state bureaucracy. In the short term, women must develop new social *habits*, leaving the boundaries of their homes, the Mothers' Clubs and religious groups. They must gain the support of political parties and other organizations to succeed, which will involve basic requirements such as the means to travel regularly to the state capital.

The associations have created opportunities for women to meet state representatives, who in turn have helped them gain access to state government programs supporting small producers. Access to the city executive has also increased. Through the seats they hold on city boards, including the Health and Education Committees, women are also participating in the municipalization process. The formation of these organized women's groups has occurred as women have continued with their domestic responsibilities and involvement in mutual aid activities. Despite this, in many cases, they face opposition from their partners and sometimes censorship within their immediate social environment.

Conclusion

There are significant points of convergence between the contemporary reality of women in Pará state fishery communities and that of women in other parts of the world. Globally, the number of economically active women in both the formal and informal sectors has increased. At the same time, flexible and less secure forms of labour and employment have also increased. Gender remains central to these changes. Hirata (2000) notes that women occupy a strategic position in the formation of new labour markets which involve the reintroduction of old forms of labour, particularly household labour. Women are often called upon to "solve the crisis" by taking up part-time occupations, being sub-contracted or working in other people's households where they are eligible for few, if any, of the social rights achieved decades ago.

Developments in fishery-related occupations are linked to developments elsewhere. In domestic spheres and in the informal sector of the economy, certain values are generated and adopted. The definitions of gender-based roles are not neutral variables in the organization of production activities. Data from fishing communities of Pará indicate how women have, in specific ways, responded to the changes resulting from the insertion of fishing activity and communities into regional, national and international markets, and from changes in fishing technology. Women, as primarily unpaid family members, have found ways to generate cash incomes within the constraints of the gendered conceptions and expectations of their key social roles. The naturalization of the sexual division of labour has compelled them to accept the opportunities available in their small communities, where informal labour relations, temporary contracts and work in other's households predominate. In one sense, there appears to be a match between the attributes of their key roles and the variable demand for their labour. However, fishing companies have made use of this flexible labour force, socially constructed as gendered, to support capital accumulation where this requires a fluctuating labour force.

In Brazil, as elsewhere, legal constraints have combined with the cultural definition of social roles to establish a sexual division of labour

which has deterred women from identifying themselves as members of a certain class and limited their awareness of their rights as workers and citizens. As fishery women in Brazil have become active in associations, the social identities linking women to the domestic sphere and to their role as family caregivers have become subject to scrutiny. There is greater awareness of the multiple activities performed by these women and of the barriers to well-paid work and social security that they experience. Their involvement in associations organized to demand citizenship rights has enabled them to participate in the political process, thereby acquiring new information and new insights that they share with others. As a result, the status of women in fisheries has been raised, and there is a broader understanding of the fishery that includes women's unpaid work and their work in the informal sector.

Women in the fishery communities of Pará state are seeking concrete initiatives to improve conditions for themselves, their families and their communities. Success will depend on several factors, including their ability to construct new identities within their communities. These identities are part of an ever-dynamic reality to which research can contribute by developing new definitions and tools for analysis regarding the status quo and for identifying the processes associated with acceptance of that status quo.

Notes

1. According to the Union of the Fishing Industry in the State of Pará and Amapá, forty companies were unionized in Pará in 1999, of which thirty-five were in the city of Belém. Four thousand people were employed by these industrial companies, but this number decreased during the 1990s due to fish scarcity, low prices in export markets, high prices for fuel and credit restrictions.
2. The Fishermen's Pastoral Council has played a crucial role in this process. MONAPE (National Fishermen's Movement) was created as a result of such movements and is known as "Fisheries Constitution."
3. *Tarrafa* are circular hand nets used to catch shrimp and small fish; *puçá* is a term of Indian origin that refers to some kinds of purse nets.
4. Vigia net weaver. Personal interview. 1996.
5. Maria José, forty-year-old resident of Vigia for more than thirty years. Personal interview. 1996.
6. US\$1 corresponds to about R \$2.
7. Vigia net weaver. Personal interview. 1996.
8. Maria Pinheiro, forty-year-old fisherman's wife. Personal interview. 1996.
9. Funds came from a federal government program called Solidarity Capacitation.
10. Coordinator of Erva *Vida* group. Personal interview. November 1999.

The Bitter End

Women's Crucial Role in the Nova Scotia Coastal Fishery¹

Marian Binkley

Before the 1990s, social sciences literature marginalized the discussion of gender relations and women's roles in the fishing industry and in household fishing enterprises. Women's contributions to these endeavours were considered secondary to an understanding of men's work in the fisheries or of the fishing industry itself—with Nadel-Klein and Davis (1988) a notable exception. As they point out:

Much of general maritime studies was highly androcentric. Those scholars who did mention women frequently relegated them to a passing comment, paragraph, or discrete section on household and/or family. Accounts focusing on women as major actors in fishing economies were relatively rare. (Davis and Nadel-Klein 1992: 135).

Research on women and the fisheries grew substantially throughout the 1990s. An overview of the discussion about the role of women in the fishery can be found in four sources: a collection of essays (McGrath et al. 1995); special issues of *Anthropologica* (Szala-Meneok 1996) and *Women's Studies International Forum* (Davis and Gerrard 2000b); and articles in the journal *Samudra* and newsletter *Yemaya*, published by the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers. These works focused on women's contributions through unpaid work to their households' fishing enterprises, the relationship between women's paid and unpaid work, and governments', communities' and individuals' recognition (or lack thereof) of these contributions to the household. This literature discussed the gender division of labour in paid work within all sectors of the fishing industry—harvesting, processing and marketing—and the gender inequities in wages, working conditions and access to social benefits and income support. It explored household dynamics such as the division of labour and access to resources within the household. It examined the relationship between gender and the effects of globalization and restructuring on the fishing industry, against the backdrop of declining fish stocks (Davis and Gerrard 2000a). Yet gender issues remain on the margins of fishery research (Harrison 1995). Although this literature is well read by feminists and progressive researchers, these works are viewed as peripheral to the

mainstream works of the field (e.g., Apostle et al. 1998; Arnason and Felt 1995; Newell and Ommer 1999).

The Study

Women's work is critical to the maintenance of the fishery. Whether directly through their labour in the fishing enterprise or indirectly through their domestic work and paid employment, fishers' wives provide crucial support to their households and to the fishing industry. This is especially true when the fisheries are in crisis. This chapter examines the key role that wives of Nova Scotia fishers played in maintaining their fishing-dependent households during the Atlantic Canadian fisheries crisis, which began in 1992–93 and continues to this day. It focuses on the households of coastal fishermen living in Lunenburg and Halifax counties. It is part of a larger research project to examine not only these coastal fishing-dependent households but also those of deep-sea fishers sailing out of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia's largest deep-sea fishing port (Binkley 2002). This area has two advantages. First, in addition to the fishing industry, the Lunenburg/Bridgewater region offers employment in tourism, light industry and the service sector, while nearby Halifax, Atlantic Canada's largest urban centre, has employment opportunities in a wide range of industries. Thus, women can find employment outside the fishery relatively near their homes. Second, although the 1990s fisheries crisis led to a decline in groundfish output, people can still make a living fishing. The combination of these characteristics is atypical of most of Atlantic Canada, where people have depended on one employer and one market and can no longer make a living by fishing alone.

The fishery traditionally employed, directly or indirectly, the largest number of workers in rural Nova Scotia, a region of high unemployment. Fishing, combined with employment in onshore processing plants and related enterprises, formed the economic and social backbone of the small communities nestled along the province's Atlantic coastline. The rise and fall of fortunes in the fishery have spelled prosperity or decline for the communities dependent on it. This situation must be placed against the backdrop of globalization—the increased integration of the world economy reflected in liberalization of trade, deregulation, privatization, reduction in taxes and cuts in government spending (Appadurai 1990; Harvey 1989; Nash 1994; Watts 1992b). According to neo-liberal advocates, these changes in government policies and economic practices were supposed to facilitate the flow of capital, goods, labour and services worldwide and to benefit society. But did they?

The Nova Scotia Fishery in Crisis

Although the fishery in Atlantic Canada has a history of boom and bust cycles, the impact of the crisis of the 1990s—part of a global problem—rivalled the Great Depression of the 1930s. The world's fisheries were in crisis, with marine resources declining globally (McGoodwin 1990; UN-FAO 1998). Around the world, coastal communities previously dependent on marine resources dramatically downsized their fisheries, turning to other industries such as tourism. Like all communities undergoing massive restructuring, coastal communities were altered culturally (Appadurai 1990), economically (Watts 1992b) and politically (Harvey 1989). The processes of globalization and restructuring reduced the subsistence production of small-scale fishers: large multi-national companies controlled access to more and more of the marine resources. As more fishers and their families lost their access to these resources, they increasingly depended on wage labour and government welfare benefits (Nash 1994). Yet these same governments were reducing social benefits. The few small-scale fishers who managed to retain their access to the resources were economically squeezed and became dependent on the large multi-nationals for the sale and processing of their products in the global economy. Fishing-dependent communities also paid the price for this economic remedy through higher unemployment rates, increased emigration, higher costs of living and increased deskilling of labour (Apostle et al. 1998; Watts 1992b).

Throughout the North Atlantic, fish stocks declined dramatically. The latest crisis in the region began in the 1980s, peaking in the early 1990s (Arnason and Felt 1995). Although scientists speculated on a variety of ecological and environmental reasons for the decline, the chief cause was overfishing.² Throughout the region, governments responded to the crisis by putting in place management policies that increased the economic efficiency of the fishing industry while promoting sustainability of the marine resources.

In 1986, 54,084 fishers and 22,133 plant workers worked in Atlantic Canada (Canada-DFO 1991). In 1987, the Atlantic Canada fishery accounted for 3 percent of the world's total catch, 80 percent of Canada's total catch and two-thirds of Canada's total fish exports (NAFO 1989; UN-FAO 1987). Between February 1992 and August 1993, the Canadian government gradually halted harvesting of northern cod, virtually stopping all cod fishing off the Atlantic coast north of Halifax. In the remaining areas, fishing continued, but with greatly reduced quotas for groundfish, including cod and pollock. As of 1993, the northern cod closures had eliminated over 40,000 fishery jobs (Kelly 1993).³ In Atlantic Canada, an estimated 50,000 people working in the fishing industry and 47,000 people working in fishery-dependent sectors saw their employment modified (Williams 1996). The moratorium led to a drastic restructuring of the fishing industry, along with the communities that supported it and were supported by it.

The federal government responded in 1995 with The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS, or “the Package”), in conjunction with early retirement deals for plant workers and buybacks of groundfish licences from fishers. The Package compensated plant workers and fishers for lost earnings and offered them retraining programs. In the summer of 1997, the federal government stopped the retraining component of TAGS, and the rest of the program ended in the summer of 1998. TAGS offered some support, but it came with many strings attached. Its retraining programs did not adequately take into account either the saturated regional market or the appropriateness of such programs for people whose formal education had ended before high school graduation. As it required participants to give up their fishing licences, many fishers were reluctant to sign on. Most of these people planned to return to the fishery “once the stocks bounce back,” and they were unwilling to give up this hope. However, even if the fishery does rebound in the future, no one expects it to support the large numbers of vessels, crews and plant workers that previously exploited these resources. With the conclusion of the TAGS program, the future for fishers, their households and their communities appeared bleak.

People who were laid off or forced out of the fishery had to find other sources of income. Some tried to find other employment. Some relied on employment insurance (EI), social assistance and other social programs that had buttressed these fishing-dependent communities in the past. However, both the federal and provincial governments decreased funding to these programs, and people found them harder to access, with fewer resources. Some were forced to relocate to find employment, either seasonally or permanently.

Discussion of the fisheries crisis revolved around the concerns of fish stock management, harvesting methods, marketing and plans for the economic development of areas hardest hit by the crisis. The discussion—in consultation with government, marine scientists, economists and fishers—focused on co-management, quota systems and other marine resources management practices (Copes 1986; McCay et al. 1995) and on local knowledge systems and their applicability to marine resource management systems (McCay 1995; Neis et al. 1999). It also gave governments and companies the opportunity and justification to close, downsize and restructure the fisheries and their enterprises. This situation was not unique. Response to the world fisheries crisis globally has been similar, including rapid development of aquaculture, technology transfer, importation of scientific management regimes, development of the tourist industry and the liberalization of trade and of direct foreign investment (Shrybman 1999; Stonich et al. 1997; Wilks 1995).

The Canadian federal government responded by making substantial changes to the way the fishery was managed, resulting in major restructuring of the industry. By withdrawing from its responsibilities of resource

management and maintenance of infrastructure, the federal government reduced its spending in the fisheries sector. For example, it increased the costs of fishing licences, passed on some of the costs of research and fishing surveillance to fishers and gave communities responsibility for the maintenance of wharves and breakwaters. The stated aim of these and other policy changes was to create a more economically efficient fishery based on reduced but sustainable fish stocks, with fewer workers and a more industrialized setting.

At the same time, provincial and federal government reforms of social programs hit fishing-dependent communities hard. Changes in unemployment insurance and retraining programs and reduced funding for health, education and other social benefits met with strong resistance in fishing communities where alternative employment was limited and the ability to transfer fisheries skills to other workplaces was minimal. Although TAGS offered some relief from 1996 to the summer of 1998, fishing communities continued without government assistance to redefine and to restructure in order to meet the new economic reality of both diminished primary resources and changing national and international policies. In the discussion of these issues, the roles and needs of women in the fisheries have taken a back seat.

In the case of the North Atlantic fisheries crisis, a few researchers (Binkley 1995 and 1996; Christiansen Ruffman 1995; Davis 1995; MacDonald 1994; Neis 1996; Neis and Williams 1997; Williams 1996) addressed the unique situation of women in the crisis. Women's work—paid and unpaid—was drastically affected. For example, of the 35,000 fishers and plant workers in Newfoundland and Labrador who lost their jobs, about 12,000 were women. Neis wrote:

[The] crisis also affected women doing unpaid work in their husbands' fishing enterprises, such as bookkeeping, and supplying and cooking for crews. Other women lost their work in child care and retail sectors in fishery-dependent communities. In addition, out-migration and government cutbacks are reducing the number of women employed in education, health and social services. (1996: 36).

These women had a vested interest in their communities, but their cries were not heard in the cacophony of voices shouting for help. Programs set up by the government, such as TAGS, excluded some female fish plant workers and many female fishers. Moreover, the programs offered training in traditionally female low-wage jobs. The government did not recognize women's contributions to the unpaid work of fishing household enterprises or their loss of employment in local spin-off enterprises.⁴

The fisheries crisis in Atlantic Canada was not just an environmental

and resource management crisis, but also a threat to coastal communities and their way of life. However, Canadian women were unable to affect the debates about fishery policy. In contrast, women of north Norway were able to play a key role in turning the fishery policy debate away from a narrowly defined economic crisis to one concerning social and community values. Norwegian women were instrumental in making the links between their ecology, households, employment, markets and communities and bringing these into the public debate about the crisis (Gerrard 1995). During the crisis of the 1990s, Canadian women failed to make these links part of the public policy debate. As a result, their vital role in the fisheries continued to be invisible, and there were few initiatives designed to compensate them.

Coastal Families⁵

In the Atlantic Canadian coastal fishery, the fishing enterprise is based within the household (Andersen 1979; Andersen and Wadel 1972; Faris 1966; Stiles 1979). Historically, coastal fishing-dependent households engaged in a combination of commodity production, wage labour and unpaid subsistence work, segregated strictly along gender lines (Antler 1977 and 1982; Davis 1983a and 1983b; Porter 1983, 1985a and 1985b; Thompson 1985). Since the 1960s, this system has eased somewhat, although this gendered division of labour continues to some extent (Davis 1983b; Porter 1983; Sinclair and Felt 1992). Men ran the fishing enterprises, relying on their wives' labour for some assistance in these enterprises. Women ran the households, took care of their children and (to varying degrees) directly supported the household's fishing enterprise through tasks such as working as shore crew and maintaining financial accounts. A few women went to sea as helpers (Sinclair and Felt 1992, Thiessen, Davis and Jentoft 1992). In times of financial difficulty, women frequently engaged in wage labour to augment the household's income and to support the fishing enterprise.

By the 1990s, these household-based fishing enterprises had three major business components—harvesting of marine resources at sea, on-shore support services and financial management (including sale of the catch)—and ran on a combination of household and non-household labour and paid and unpaid labour. Work patterns and the organization of labour at sea and on shore varied according to the fishery being exploited. Each fishery had different seasons and required different types of gear, work patterns, fishing schedules and crew size, with different forms of support from the fishing enterprises' households. Crew sizes ranged from one (e.g., lobstering) to four (e.g., some groundfishing and scalloping). The length of the voyage ranged from day sails (e.g., lobstering and salt fish) to a week (e.g., swordfishing). Some types of fishing required more household labour (e.g., salting cod) and others less (e.g., swordfishing). All fishers took some time off during the year, usually for boat and gear maintenance, family vacations, hunting, illness or accident and Christmas. Nearly 90 percent of these men

collected unemployment insurance some time during the year.

The degree to which other household members (usually wives) contributed to the household's fishing enterprise determined the degree to which workplace and home, and workmates and household members, coincided. The overlap of public and domestic domains varied from household to household, from one fishing season to another and from one year to the next. The working conditions in each fishery set up inherent conflicts between spouses' adaptations. Conflicts arose over the privileging of the fishing enterprise's needs over all other household concerns. Husbands and wives in these households negotiated, virtually daily, the degree to which their domains of influence and control overlapped. Thus, the degree of separation between the two domains was continually changing.

This flexibility and accommodation to the demands of the fishing enterprise and the needs of the household characterized all coastal fishing-dependent households (Davis and Nadel-Klein 1997). Women in these households not only contributed in a myriad of ways to the household enterprise but also sustained the fishery itself during times of crisis (Davis and Gerrard 2000a). I asked the Nova Scotia coastal fishers' wives about their involvement in their households' enterprises.⁶ The majority of replies indicated that women saw the fishing enterprise as primarily their husband's domain, in which they "helped out." All fishermen's wives supplied their husbands with domestic services such as washing his clothes and cooking meals. Many of these women's involvement in the household fishing enterprise also included contributing to the business side of the enterprise—keeping the books, buying supplies, selling the fish, working as shore managers and being active partners through direct participation in the enterprise including harvesting. All of these tasks might have involved paid or unpaid labour. Table 1 summarizes this wide range of activities and the involvement of coastal fishermen's wives in their husbands' fishing enterprises: in terms of direct participation, business/financial management, support services and domestic service.

Table 1 compares the involvement of women in their households' fishing enterprises based on the job status—captain versus crew—of their husbands.⁷ When job status was controlled for, the involvement of crewmen's wives (Column 2) appeared substantially less than that of captains' wives (Column 1) for all activities except washing his fishing clothes. A small number of women, mostly crewmen's wives, limited their involvement to domestic services. Usually these women got up before dawn, prepared their husbands' breakfast, made their lunches, sent them off to work in clean clothes and prepared their dinners for their return. These contributions to their husbands' well-being resembled those of many women in non-fishing blue-collar households. Helpers' wives could maintain some distance from their husbands' work and could avoid involvement in the fishery beyond "domestic service"; however, these services were crucial to maintaining the

Table 1: Reported Involvement of Wives in Their Households' Fishing Enterprises: Comparison Among Wives by Husband's Job Status (in percentages)

Tasks	Crews' Wives	Captains' Wives	All Wives
<i>Direct Participation</i>			
Bait trawl/line	9	12	11
Repair nets or traps	2	16	12
Knit lobster heads	0	5	3
Clean and/or salt fish	9	20	17
Fish with husband	11	31	25
<i>Business/Financial Management</i>			
Arrange sale of catches	7	24	19
Prepare income tax	14	12	13
Arrange for credit	9	15	13
Keep the books	14	68	52
Keep record of catches	18	44	36
Pay fishing bills	11	70	53
Track fish prices	7	34	26
<i>Support Services</i>			
Go for parts for boat, etc.	16	59	47
Listen to CB/marine radio	29	55	48
Clean the boat	16	33	27
<i>Domestic Services</i>			
Make meals for crew	18	47	38
Clean fishing clothes	95	95	95
Number in sample	44	106	150
Missing values (1) N/A = Not Asked			

fishery. A few crewmen's wives participated directly in the fishery, usually by working for their husbands' bosses to supplement their household income. Other crewmen's wives cleaned, gutted and salted fish, helped with repairs and did routine shore jobs, thereby decreasing their husbands' expenses.

Almost all captains' wives participated, at least indirectly, in their husbands' fishing enterprises. Most of them kept the books and paid the fishing bills, and a small percentage arranged credit. About half kept records of the catches, one-third tracked fish prices and one-fourth arranged for sale of the catches. Many went for parts for the boat and cooked meals for their husbands' crews. About one-third cleaned the boat, and almost all washed their husband's fishing clothes. Direct participation in the fishing enterprise was lower. Less than one-third went fishing with their husbands. Less than

one-fifth of them cleaned and salted fish, repaired nets and traps, baited trawl or knitted heads for the lobster traps.

However, this “laundry list” of tasks obscures the interdependency and interaction between husbands’ and wives’ work spheres. It also does not indicate how women’s activities in the fishing enterprise reorganized or restricted their other daily activities. Each household developed a livelihood strategy that incorporated women’s paid and unpaid labour while accommodating specific personal circumstances. In every coastal fishing-dependent household, the couple needed to decide how involved the wife would be in her husband’s fishing and what tasks she would take on. If she did not have the skills to perform these tasks, she had to learn them. She also had to integrate this work into her other commitments—household and family responsibilities, and possibly employment—while maintaining her own autonomy. Invariably, conflicts arose between spouses over what the wife was willing to do for the enterprise and what her husband would like her to contribute to it.⁸ Thiessen, Davis and Jentoft (1992) and Munk-Madsen (2000) reported similar conflicts in Norwegian fishing-dependent households.

When women entered the workforce, their involvement in the household fishing enterprises changed. Table 2 compares the involvement of the forty-seven captains’ wives who had jobs outside the home with the fifty-nine who did not. Both groups reported virtually the same level of involvement in washing their husband’s fishing clothes (96/95 percent), listening to CB and marine radio (55/55 percent), arranging sales of catches (25/22 percent), keeping records of catches (43/46 percent), tracking fish prices (32/36 percent) and fishing with their husbands (32/30 percent). However, the women who had jobs reported higher involvement in five activities: baiting trawl or lines (15/10 percent), cleaning and/or salting fish (25/15 percent), preparing income tax (17/8 percent), arranging credit (19/12 percent) and cleaning the boat (38/27 percent). Women who were not employed reported higher involvement in the six remaining activities: repairing nets or traps (13/19 percent), knitting lobster heads (2/7 percent), keeping the books (62/73 percent), paying fishing bills (62/76 percent), going for parts for the boat (55/62 percent) and making meals for the crew (42/51 percent).

Two areas of increased involvement by employed wives—baiting trawl and salting and drying fish—seem counter-intuitive. These labour-intensive tasks are associated with catching and processing of groundfish, the hardest-hit fishery. In households dependent on the groundfishery for survival, wives often had to take paid employment to offset the economic stresses on their households. In order to maximize economic advantages for their households, the women needed to continue to perform these labour-intensive fishing tasks as well as working in the paid labour force. Without this “triple day,” the household’s fishing enterprise would have had to hire someone else to bait the trawl or process the fish, which could result in

Table 2: Reported Involvement of Wives in Their Husbands' Fishing Enterprises: Comparison among Captains' Wives by Wife's Employment Status (in percentages)

Tasks	Employed Homemakers		
	All Captains' Wives	Wives	
<i>Direct Participation</i>			
Bait trawl/line	12	15	10
Repair nets or traps	16	13	19
Knit lobster heads	5	2	7
Clean and/or salt fish	20	25	15
Fish with husband	31	32	30
<i>Business/Financial Management</i>			
Arrange sales of catches	24	25	22
Prepare income tax	12	17	8
Arrange for credit	15	19	12
Keep the books	68	62	73
Keep record of catches	44	43	46
Pay fishing bills	70	62	76
Track fish prices	34	32	36
<i>Support Services</i>			
Go for parts for boat, etc.	59	55	62
Listen to CB/marine radio	55	55	55
Clean the boat	33	38	27
<i>Domestic Services</i>			
Make meals for the crew	47	42	51
Clean fishing clothes	95	96	95
Number in sample	106	47	59
Missing values (o)			

marginal or negative gains in household income. These considerations meant that women in paid employment whose husbands depended on the groundfishery needed to maintain their substantial additional workloads in order for the fishing enterprise to be profitable.

Some women who participated heavily in their husbands' fishing enterprises argued that this involvement precluded them from paid employment. The family life course puts various and ever-changing stresses on women's work. Fishers' wives experienced a range of pressures—newly married, coping with small children, managing school-age children, dealing with teenagers and looking after ailing parents and grandparents. However, these pressures competed with those associated with the needs of the fishing enterprise. Every household made compromises. For example, some women did not participate in the fishery when their children were home

from school in the summer, but they worked for the household fishing enterprise during the fall and winter months. Others refrained from going to work until their youngest child went to high school. However, the financial pressures exerted by the fisheries crisis meant that women had to re-evaluate their involvement in the workforce and the fishing enterprise.

Impact of the Fisheries Crisis

The fisheries crisis led to the reorganization and restructuring of the fishing industry, fishing enterprises and fishing-dependent households. Incomes of fishers dropped dramatically. In response to the restrictions on catches and the shortage of fish, coastal fishing-dependent households developed four main strategies, used individually or in tandem, to meet the crisis: remaining at sea longer and exploiting resources farther offshore or in richer fishing grounds; exploiting as many species as possible; employing as much household or family labour as possible; and using income from household members' wage labour to subsidize the fishing enterprise. Each strategy imposed different stresses on household adaptations to the fishery. A few fishers rejected the trade-offs involved with any of these strategies and opted instead to continue to exploit their traditional fishing grounds while increasing their fishing effort.

It had long been a practice in the coastal fishery that household members would seek employment outside the fishery when things got financially tough. As discussed earlier, in times of financial crisis, fishing-dependent households relied on income from women's paid employment to carry them through. When this strategy proved inadequate—that is, when wages from wives' part-time or full-time jobs could not meet the needs of the household—men then considered seeking employment outside the fishery. For example, a fisherman might find wage work during the “off-season” and fish only the most lucrative fisheries such as lobster, or he might “mothball” the vessel and work at another job year-round until the boat and other expenses were paid off. In the best of times, realizing the dream of owning a boat, buying a home and raising a family put a huge financial strain on a couple. Most fishing-dependent couples set priorities and decided how much they would sacrifice to keep the boat running. In many cases, the economic strain that boat expenses put on the household budget became the major cause of friction between husband and wife. In economic hard times, tensions increased in many households. The two basic questions for these men and their households were: whether or not the monetary benefits were sufficient; and whether or not the non-monetary costs (such as long periods away from home and more hazardous working conditions) were worth it.

The real economic problem lay in reliance on one species as the mainstay of the household economy. The fisherman who could afford to hold a number of licences could spread the risk: if one fishery declined,

another could be exploited. However, all fisheries followed a cyclical pattern, and few fisheries in the North Atlantic were rebounding as quickly to baseline stock levels as they had in the past (Pauly and MacLean 2003).

Since lobster and groundfish harvesting were labour-intensive, one way to cut costs was to have wives, sons or other family members participate directly in the fishing enterprise either as “helpers” on board or as shore crew—baiting lines, repairing nets, gear and traps or cleaning and salting fish. Consolidation of family labour in order to keep profits in the fishing-dependent household was a strategy used also in Norwegian households during the fisheries crisis there (Munk-Madsen 2000). This strategy had been frequently used in the past in Nova Scotia fisheries where fishers returned home most evenings. But even in these situations, some fishers still could not make a living. For many women, the amount of work they did in the fishery had dramatically increased, particularly the work associated with the lobster fishery or the salt fish trade.

The longer fishing trips required in the groundfishery limited wives’ ability to work on board the fishing boats, due to their 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 now stayed home because of the longer trips. Even those women who only did shore-based work, such as baiting trawl and selling catches, stopped working for their fishing enterprises because of the distances involved. In order to sustain economies, the husbands themselves, rather than hiring someone, took on fishery tasks previously done by wives. Many women substituted paid employment on shore for their former unpaid labour on their husbands’ boats. For a number of wives, the intensification of fishing meant that for the first time they had to cope with running the household completely on their own.

Unlike wage workers whose employment is terminated by a company, the coastal fisher had to decide whether to quit or be closed down by the government through fishery regulations. For many fishers, the economic considerations remained secondary to their desire to fish and to be at sea. The longer these men had fished, the more difficult it was for them to give up fishing. The key to continue fishing was finding alternative sources of household income that allowed the household fishing enterprise to limp along until the stocks rebounded. The assumption that wives would take on or maintain a job in order to support the household fishing enterprise underlay most households’ strategies. Women’s labour was seen as a household resource, which could be used by the household or in the workforce to offset economic difficulties caused by the fisheries’ crisis, and thus to subsidize the fishing industry. In the best of economic times, female labour—paid and unpaid—supports the fishery, but in times of financial distress, it may sustain the fishery.

Conclusion

This chapter is titled “the bitter end” for two reasons. First, the nautical term “bitter end” refers to the end of a rope that is fastened around one of the pair of posts (bitts) on a vessel’s deck, thereby holding the boat to the shore. The restructuring of the fishery has made women’s paid and unpaid labour, within household-based fishing enterprises and outside them, even more important to the survival of this fishing industry. Women’s labour is crucial to the day-to-day operations of these enterprises, through direct participation in fishing as well as through business and financial management, support services and domestic labour. Women’s unpaid labour in the home and in the fishing enterprise replaced other forms of labour. Women have willingly taken on these additional burdens, because they recognize the needs of other household members, acknowledge them as legitimate and take actions to address them. These actions reflect a “traditional” female response that is essentially care-giving. By taking on these additional burdens, women reassert their femininity (Benjamin 1988). Women’s social and emotional support and their labour have helped sustain the coastal fishery. They are the “bitter end” for fishing-dependent households and for the coastal fishery.

The second, usual meaning of “bitter end” refers to a painful and cruel demise. It is clear that day-to-day lived experiences have not improved for these fishing-dependent households. Their livelihood strategies support Elson’s (1992a) argument that women’s unpaid labour is crucial to absorbing the adverse effects of economic restructuring. This is especially true in fishing households, where women’s wages became the mainstay of these households’ finances. Their livelihood strategies relied on women’s labour, in this case women’s wages, to alleviate the adverse affects of the fishing industry’s restructuring. These households were chosen for this study partly because of the advantages they had: they were located in an area where fishing was still possible; where there was employment for women and alternative employment for men and where some social services were still available. And yet, even with these advantages, they failed to achieve the promise of a better life proposed by those guiding the fisheries restructuring.

Notes

1. This paper is a distillation of Chapters 1 and 2 of Binkley (2002).
2. For a summary and analysis of the reasons for the crisis in the fishery, and the government studies leading up to the crisis, see Finlayson (1994).
3. The government did not offer relief to local retailers or others indirectly affected by the fishery closures.
4. This neglect is not unique in the North American or Canadian context; see Day and Brodsky (1998) and Elson (1992a).
5. For information on deep-sea fishing families, see Binkley and Thiessen (1988), and Binkley (1995 and 2002).

6. For similar findings on Newfoundland coastal fishing-dependent households on the Great Northern Peninsula, see Sinclair and Felt (1992).
7. For comparative information, see Thiessen, Davis and Jentoft (1992), Binkley (2002) and Sinclair and Felt (1992).
8. Thiessen, Davis and Jentoft (1992) report that Nova Scotia coastal fishermen wanted their wives to be more involved in their fishing enterprises.

Women's Strategies in the Globalized Lake Victoria Fisheries¹

Modesta Medard

Fisheries globalization is transforming the structure of markets and, along with this, the nature of gender relationships. Social, political and economic processes now operate locally and globally. Women in the Kagera Region of Lake Victoria in northwest Tanzania face major challenges in the fishery due to the growing export market for Nile perch and the consequent reorganization of local fisheries. This chapter presents a case study of the links between globalized markets for Nile perch and changing gender relationships in the Lake Victoria fisheries of Tanzania. It explores the challenges that women have faced and describes some of their responses, particularly those of the Tweyambe Fishing Enterprise, or Tweyambe Group, a well-known women's group based in Kasheno village in Ruhanga sub-village (*kitongoji*²) on the shores of Lake Victoria in the Muleba District of Kagera Region. The Tweyambe women, like those in other districts, face many challenges. They have limited access to capital, men interfere in their activities, their fishing gear is stolen, and they must deal with socio-cultural barriers to their activities. The chapter concludes by exploring the relevance of this case study for future initiatives to promote gender equality in Tanzania in the context of globalization.

The Context

Lake Victoria is the second largest freshwater lake in the world, with a surface area of 68,800 square kilometres shared about equally between Tanzania and Uganda, with Kenya administering 6 percent. About half of its 3,450-kilometre shoreline is in Tanzania (Kudhongania and Cordone 1974; Ligtvoet and Mkumbo 1990; Ligtvoet et al. 1995). The Lake accounts for about 60 percent of Tanzania's inland fish production. Its fish and fish products are a significant source of food for the country, yielding some 122,000 tonnes in 1995 and contributing to the country's foreign exchange coffers (about US\$60 million in 1997).³ The fisheries provide income and employment to over 32,000 full-time fishers, and an estimated 500,000 people are employed formally and informally in fisheries-related activities (Maembe 1998).

The Kagera Region of northwest Tanzania, located on the shores of Lake Victoria, shares borders with Uganda on the north, Rwanda and Burundi on the west and the Tanzanian regions of Kigoma, Shinyanga and

Mwanza on the southwest. Kagera consists of six districts, Bukoba Rural, Bukoba Urban, Muleba, Biharamulo, Karagwe and Ngara. The region is isolated from the rest of the country by poor transportation and communication networks. It is home to about 1.6 million people (Mngulwi and Chuma 1998), 95 percent of whom are from the Haya ethnic group. The livelihood of more than 90 percent of the people is derived from agriculture and fishing.

Women comprise 51 percent of the population, but they contribute 70 percent of all the labour input to farming, the region's dominant economic activity (Mngulwi and Chuma 1998). Despite this, women's contributions are poorly recognized and greatly undervalued. Women have an inferior position in certain customs and taboos and in the sexual division of labour (Mutoro 1997). Previous research on Lake Victoria suggested that women dominate the fish trade (Abila 1994; Maembe 1990), implying that fishermen are dependent on women to convert the fish into money or trade it for other food. However, more recent work in the Tanzanian part of Lake Victoria suggests that women no longer dominate the fish trade: out of 198 Tanzanian fish traders interviewed in 1998, 78 percent were male (SEDAWOG 1999).

This chapter explores some of the local responses to global challenges brought about by the growing export trade in Lake Victoria's Nile perch. We begin with a general description of the Lake Victoria fishery and women's participation in it, followed by a discussion of the Tweyambe Fishing Group and its attempts to improve women's capacity to make a living from the fisheries. The group has undertaken several initiatives aimed at sustaining their livelihoods through fishing and have pursued some ecologically sound, self-development strategies. By examining their objectives and activities, as well as the barriers they have encountered, this discussion attempts to further our understanding of the relationship between global and local processes.

Globalization and Gender in the Tanzanian Lake Victoria Fisheries

Until recently, the Lake Victoria fisheries were multi-species fisheries. Haplochromine cichlids dominated, with more than three hundred species harvested. The gillnet fishery targeted two Tilapine cichlids (*Oreochromis esculentus* and *Oreochromis variabilis*), and in addition, thirty-eight other fish species were present in the Lake (Ligtvoet et al. 1995). A trawl survey in the late 1960s found that the Haplochromine species comprised about 80 percent of the demersal fish biomass of the Lake (Kudhongania and Cordone 1974). Due to their small size and bony texture, they were among the last to be exploited by the fishery.

The main commercial species before the 1980s was Tilapia (*O. esculentus* and *O. niloticus*). As this species was overfished, commercial fisheries developed for a succession of other species, notably Bagrus and Labeo, and catch rates for these species increased briefly and then declined rapidly. No

major market could be found for the commonest Lates perch species (Gibbon 1997). Then in the 1980s, an explosive increase in the Lates stocks was reported in several areas of the Lake, coinciding with a decline in most other fish stocks (Ligtvoet et al. 1995). Nile perch (*Lates niloticus*) was later nicknamed Mkombozi (“the saviour”) because it fuelled a major expansion in the Lake Victoria fishery. The increase in the abundance of Nile perch was related to its predation on small species such as Haplochromines, Rastrineobola, Clarias and Bagrus, and on the pelagic species Schilbe (Ligtvoet et al. 1995). Nile perch was also protected by the type of gear used in the 1980s, consisting of small nets unsuitable for catching the perch, and by limited local demand due to customary food preferences.

Historically, fish was primarily consumed fresh, except for some sales of sun-dried or smoked fish to distant markets.⁴ The sexual division of labour varied from place to place, depending on the ethnic origin of the group. Women in the eastern part of Lake Victoria were more likely to participate in fish trading than those in the central and western parts. Traditionally, the Sukuma from the central part were mainly farmers, and the Haya from the western part did not value fish-related activities. Local culture generally prohibited women from being away from their homes, limiting their ability to trade fish. The dominant means of transport was either on foot or by bicycle, which tended to limit fish traders to local markets.

In Tanzania, the Nile perch fishery attracted tremendous investment beginning in the 1990s. It quickly developed into an export industry and one of the most important economic activities in the area. Industrial fish processing plants and fishing camps generate revenue for communities surrounding Lake Victoria. However, recent research in the Tanzanian part of the Lake indicates that small-scale fish traders and processors have had problems benefiting from this expanding fishery. The two main problems, irrespective of gender, are transport and the availability of adequate funds.

Most fish harvesters in the Nile perch fishing industry are men. In 2000, male suppliers made up 84 percent (ninety-seven) of those providing raw material to the processing sector (Medard et al. 2002). Men also largely control the new harvesting technologies associated with the Nile perch fishery (Medard and Wilson 1996). Fish factory owners attribute the dominance of male fish suppliers over females to men having access to more of the capital needed to buy collector boats, provide seed money and hire labourers. Men can also travel more frequently, have better access to business collateral and are reported to be more aggressive than women in persuading owners to give them loans or advances for fish procurement payments.

There are important differences between men and women in the way they engage in the Tanzanian Lake Victoria fish trade. Women are more likely than men to combine fish trade with other types of work. A majority

of women (57 percent) participate only in fish trading, but 43 percent combine fish trading with other business activities. By contrast, 74 percent of men participate only in fish trading, while 26 percent combine fish trading and other business (SEDAWOG 1999). The higher percentage of women than men who combine fish trading with other business may indicate their greater vulnerability and their income insecurity in fisheries-related activities.

In contrast to harvesting, women were the majority of those purchasing and processing the waste from fish plants in the first three years of factory development in Tanzania (Medard et al. 2002). Nile perch fish frames (skeletons with some flesh still on them), locally known as *punk*, were considered waste, and factories initially had to pay to dispose of them. To eliminate this cost, factories began selling them to local processors. Women were the first group to look for Nile perch by-products in factory doorways. This business started in 1993, one year after fish processing firms invested in Tanzania. A study carried out in *punk* processing camps indicated that 70 percent of *punk* dealers were women (Medard 1997; Medard et al. 2002). In six Nile perch processing plants on the Tanzanian side of the Lake, about 67 percent of those buying and utilizing by-products from the plants were women. The women collected fish frames in troughs, baskets, hand-drawn carts and wheelbarrows, and took them to the processing camps. In 1997, four to seven tonnes of fresh fish frames cost T.Shs.60,000–90,000 (US\$75–112.50)⁵ wholesale. After processing (smoking and sun drying), the processed *punk* could be sold for T.Shs.100,000–120,000 (US\$125–150). Single and married women used the revenue from this activity to build houses, feed their families, buy clothing and pay school fees and medical bills.

Over time, Nile perch processing factories improved their filleting process so that no fish was left on the frames. This meant that the *punk* community could not get enough fish frames for human consumption. In response, some women started to grind the *punkies* in locally made mortars and feed them to their chickens. In 1996 and 1997, processed *punk* for animal feed was commercialized, resulting in new investments in local fishmeal factories and further marginalizing women buyers. The major markets for processed fish frames were located in Shinyanga, Tabora, Dodoma, Morogoro, Singida, Mwanza, Mara and some parts of Kagera Region. The main markets for fishmeal products were in Dar Es Salaam, Aursha, Mwanza, Morogoro, Dodoma and neighbouring countries such as Zambia and Kenya.

In 1998, the hygiene standards in fish processing required by European Union export regulations encouraged Nile perch factory owners to seek wholesale buyers for their by-products. This ensured that the offal from the fish would be cleared away from the factory doorways more quickly. When factory owners started selling their fish frames to wholesalers, many women were forced out of the trade. Most could not compete with the men who were buying these products for animal feed as well as human consumption.

The increased demand resulted in high procurement costs, which women could not manage.

The strong export orientation of the Nile perch industry and the limited opportunities for women to derive employment and incomes from the sector have encouraged some to switch to buying juvenile Nile perch harvested in illegal gear. The minimum size for legally harvested Nile perch is half a kilogram. Purchasing legal fish requires access to sufficient capital to compete with factory agents, the main buyers, who are not allowed to purchase juvenile Nile perch. The small traders who serve the local markets tend to buy the illegal, small fish because it is cheaper and because falling incomes among local consumers limit the price they can pay for fish. Women traders are among those who have resorted to buying fish harvested in illegal, small-mesh gear.

Mkumbo (1999) noted that a majority of the Nile perch caught were below forty-five cm Total Length (TL), well below the size at first maturity. In studies by Geheb and colleagues (2000) and Medard (2002) at Ihale beach in Tanzania, respondents indicated a preference for illegal nets, beach seines and nets with a mesh size between 2.5 and 4.5 inches, below the recommended minimum mesh size of five inches (127 mm). They reported that smaller mesh sizes earned them higher incomes from their fish sales to industrial fish collectors. They were aware that gillnets with small mesh size were destructive and that the government opposed small-mesh nets. Marketing this fish provides a precarious source of income for small traders.

Some industrial agents buy the small, illegal Nile perch. Because they can offer higher prices, some women fish traders are resorting to staying in the beach seine fishing camps overnight to get priority access to the available catch. Others have dropped out of the fish trade and started trading other goods instead. One of the reasons why women are involved in the juvenile fish trade is because most do not own bicycles. With bicycles, they could purchase fish from different beaches and transport it to inland markets more easily (SEDAWOG 1999). If illegal gear is eliminated, the surviving women traders and processors could lose their access to fish.

Women traders also buy fresh fish such as *Alestes*, *Dagaa*, *Momyrus* and *Haplochromines*, which are sold at a lower price than processed fish. Fresh fish is highly perishable; fish harvesters have few or no places to store it and lack facilities for preserving it. Thus, if they do not sell their fish immediately, they will lose the opportunity to get the best prices from the traders waiting on the beach. Women are commonly found selling fresh fish in the community or in the regional markets immediately after the men have landed. Trading small quantities of fresh fish at the beach reduces the risk of damage. It also costs less because there is no processing and it consumes less time and labour. However, it does require prior business arrangements with fishermen who target juvenile fish. These fishermen must also evade law enforcers.

Some women also work in the Nile perch processing factories. These women workers tend to be segregated into the low status, poorly paid types of work commonly associated with “caring” professions, such as laundry work, fillet trimming, packing, sweeping and cleaning. As in other parts of the world, men dominate the higher paid jobs, including those involving fish procurement, administration, quality control, environmental engineering, accounting, production supervision, ice machine operation and whole fish filleting and skinning. In a study of six plants, Medard et al. (2002) found that women comprised 30 percent of the workforce of about 1,100. Less than 10 percent of the administrative support staff were women and, within this category, about half of the sweepers and cleaners and most of the laundry workers were women. In production, 19 percent of the workers were women. They worked mostly as trimmers, packers and labourers. The most valuable Nile perch by-product in these plants was processed and dried swim bladders, which receive a high price in export markets. Of those who processed and dried these bladders, 81.4 percent (136) were women (Medard et al. 2002). In defence of the gender-based division of labour, one of the factory owners stated that management regarded filleting and skinning as rough jobs that men could manage better than women. In contrast, women were considered to be better than men at trimming and packing, work that had to be done carefully because mistakes could result in the rejection of an entire shipment to foreign markets.

Women Organizing for Change

There are many groups struggling for greater economic independence for women in the Kagera region. These groups are a dynamic part of the economy, particularly within the fishing and farming sectors. Thus, Kagera has forty-two registered women's fishing groups, more than any other region in the Tanzanian part of Lake Victoria. The Community Development Officer from Muleba and representatives of some of the women's projects suggested several reasons for the large number of women's groups. Many were originally formed as mutual assistance groups, often with social welfare goals. During the course of the year, there are many social functions in the Haya community at which women assemble, sharing ideas and thoughts. These include weddings, visits to friends, burials and visits to a religious daughter as godmothers. These activities often require a contribution of funds, and because responsibility for obtaining these funds lies mainly with women, they form groups to share this responsibility and increase their ability to raise the money. Many of these mutual assistance groups have branched out into income-generating activities, some attracting assistance from government institutions and donor agencies. However, most are small, under-funded and marginal to the mainstream national economy.

The mobilization of women in Kagera is also partly a response to several historical events contributing to a sense that the region must solve its own

problems.⁶ The war between Tanzania and Idi Amin of Uganda in 1978, the collapse of the East African Community in 1977 and the increasing isolation of Kagera due to inadequate transport infrastructure, have all contributed to this sense. In addition, Kagera has been devastated by the AIDS epidemic, and civil wars in neighbouring Rwanda and Burundi have resulted in an influx of orphans and displaced people. The sinking of a ferry in 1995, killing 500 people, and grenade attacks on a primary school in 1997 have also affected people's attitudes.

Kagera's women have sought to solve their problems by organizing, but their socio-economic situation makes it difficult for them to form groups. They face multiple household roles with heavy workloads, along with capital shortages and minimal access to credit, and they have limited education. They also often lack confidence and have to confront "negative" beliefs about women. On the positive side, women we interviewed identified several factors that have contributed to their successful organization. Central to their success has been the trust they share, a characteristic that is lacking in men's groups.

Despite their significant contribution to the artisanal fishery and to household economies, women in Kagera have had little help from governments or non-governmental organizations. Fisheries and rural projects in general have found it difficult to raise funds. The funding that has become available for fisheries-related groups in recent years has been for credit schemes, community development enhancement and training programs and the like. Those with collateral—primarily men—have obtained loans through the Cooperative Rural Development Bank for such items as fishing gear, outboard engines, spare parts and processing equipment such as *chorkor* ovens (Mngulwi and Chuma 1998). Under the Kagera Fisheries Project, supported by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, soft loans were made available to women without collateral through the Women's Credit Revolving Fund (WCRF). The fund gave women access to capital for their fish trading and processing and also for their activities as food and drink vendors (known in Kiswahili as *Mama Ntilie* or *lisbe*) on the islands and beaches. Grants ranged from T.Shs.15,000–50,000 (US\$19–63). Eighty-one women in Kagera benefited from these grants. Another source of funds was the Fisheries Credit Revolving Fund (FCRF), which fishers used to acquire outboard motors, boats and other assets. Only eight women (compared to 402 male fishers) benefited from this fund (Mngulwi and Chuma 1998).

Women from Ruhanga suggested several reasons why women had been unsuccessful in obtaining credit from the revolving funds. These included the fact that women typically lack collateral; men often interfere with their wives' attempts to apply for these funds; and men are better able to aggressively pursue the loans. In addition, women often lack knowledge about how to apply for the loans, men bribe the loan officials and new men

entering the fish business tend to limit women's chances to receive loans. Among those women whose loan applications were successful, some quarrelled with their husbands over the loans, with some ending up divorced over their refusal to surrender their loans to their husbands. Other women found themselves unable to fully repay their loans because the money was mismanaged or abused by their husbands.

The Kagera women's fishing groups are at different stages of development. The next section describes one of these groups, the Tweyambe Fishing Enterprise. It discusses why they organized, the types of challenges they have encountered and the responses or coping strategies they have developed.

The Tweyambe Fishing Enterprise

The Tweyambe Fishing Enterprise, or the Tweyambe Group, started as a self-help group for women in Ruhanga. Living conditions are tough in Ruhanga village, with no primary school, hospital or reliable shops. Women's workloads are heavy, consisting of household work, agriculture and work in the fisheries. The women spend much of their time on farms on the slope behind the village. The fishermen's hours for catching fish determine the daily pattern of household activities for men and women. Fishermen leave at night or in the evening, while their wives work during the day. Men have little or no opportunity for family life, and this adds to women's responsibilities and work. At the time of the case study, the women sold fish to supplement their incomes. They were forced to accept the prices offered by buyers on the beaches and wanted to change this. One said, "We can't afford to sell the fish in the distant markets. Transport is a big problem, accompanied by the lack of a well established market in our village."⁷ Ruhanga's women thought that if they could acquire some kind of transport, like a mini-bus, they could get a better price for their fish. In order to do this, however, they needed a way to raise the capital to buy the vehicle.

In 1992, fourteen women came together to form the Tweyambe Fishing Group. They agreed that their objectives would be to:

- coordinate women's economic and day-to-day activities;
- improve household dietary status and socio-economic condition of communities in Ruhanga by investing in fishing activities;
- protect all women's rights;
- help each other;
- solve the road transportation problem in their community.

They also agreed that fourteen people would be the maximum membership of the group, and members had to be married women living in Ruhanga. The intent of the local residence requirement was to avoid possible negative effects that migration could have on the group's success. Finally, all members

had to be mature and trustworthy. The group also discussed ways to cope with conflicts and arranged for an old woman to provide guidance whenever members did not agree or when misunderstandings arose.

In 1993, the group collected US\$82 from the revolving credit scheme and supplemented this with weekly membership fees of approximately US\$0.40 per woman. Members sold bananas, groundnuts, handicrafts and grass for roofing and home “carpeting” (Haya communities cover their floors with grass which they change every two weeks). They used the money raised to invest in smoked and fried fish processing, and they bought six nets and hired a boat. Towards the end of the year, they obtained a grant of US\$188 from SWISSAID, which they used to buy twenty-two gillnets and a boat. SWISSAID representatives in Kagera were so impressed by the group’s good record of finances and expenditures that they provided a second grant of T.Shs.1,500,000 (US\$1,409), which was re-invested in fishing activities with a small proportion distributed to the group as bonuses. In the same year, the women considered ways to reduce the workloads of members. They started a nursery school, hiring a part-time teacher and charging school fees that were lower for members than for non-members. Several years later, in 1996, the group decided to invest in the fishery for Dagaa, a small, sardine-like pelagic whose commercial importance is growing in Tanzania. The Tweyambe Group invested T.Shs.1,300,000 (US\$1,625) from their profits and bought two Dagaa seines, eight pressure lamps, two fishing canoes and an additional thirty Dagaa nets. The remaining money was spent on operational costs.

Towards the end of 1997, the group applied for a loan from the Kagera Fisheries Project to buy a vehicle to solve community transport problems. However, this application was rejected by the Fisheries Department on the grounds that operating and maintenance costs for the vehicle would be high in view of the bad roads in the area. The Department suggested the group consider water transport as an alternative. The women obtained a loan of T.Shs.3,580,000 (US\$4,475) and bought a twenty-five horsepower outboard engine and a transport boat. This investment has yielded dividends.⁸

In order to sell their fish, the Tweyambe Group women have to make prior arrangements with the male buyers to assure a guaranteed market, particularly during the farming season, when many buyers return to their farms. Most of these male buyers are also fishermen, who have an understanding with the other fishermen that they will help each other out if they run into trouble while on the Lake. These male buyers have come to dominate fish trading activities at the landing site. The Tweyambe women acknowledge that they could be easily out-sold by them and possibly even put out of business. Other challenges relate to export markets, local competition and financial resources for re-investment. Whenever the European Union closes the markets for Nile perch (for various reasons), prices drop so low that the women barely cover production costs. The

women are aware of their reliance on export markets and want to find reliable alternative markets where they can sell their Nile perch when the export market is closed. Nile perch export bans and intense competition when the export markets are open can destroy their savings. In addition, the Group's water transport business faltered somewhat, due to competition from some men who got into the same business. In order to minimize competition, the two businesses agreed on a schedule providing each with equal opportunities. Nevertheless, competition has halved their income from this source. Finally, members point out that they have little in the way of funds to expand their businesses.

The Tweyambe Group has also had to cope with gear theft due to the increased demand for the fish in export markets and difficulties in arranging night patrols to protect fishing gear in the water. Competition and theft have forced some women to drop out of fishing or to shift to less competitive and less remunerative parts of the fishery. Absentee owners are particularly likely to be cheated of their catch and gear (Ikiara 1999). Because most women hire out their fishing gear to fishermen and do not take part in fishing activities away from the shore, they are most at risk of gear theft. This risk limits the number of units each woman investor is willing to operate. Women often employ male relatives to protect them against theft of nets and catch. In Ruhanga, the women employed their sons as crewmembers, an idea they obtained from another women's fishing enterprise. Despite such precautions, in 1997, profits were lost when forty-five of the group's gillnets were stolen (Medard 2000). These nets had targeted Nile perch, the group's most profitable fish. In some cases, women fishers have arranged for night patrols on Lake Victoria and have selected times for fishing and landing that make it easier for them to monitor their catch and gear.

The women also face challenges related to education and training. As with most African women, members of the Tweyambe Group generally have low levels of formal education (Guyer 1984). Only nine of the fourteen had successfully completed primary education, three had some primary education and two had no education at all. This problem exists across the region. Out of 198 fish traders and processors, only 6 percent were trained in bookkeeping and 2 percent in fish processing and, of those with training, only three were women (SEDAWOG 1999). The women in the group believed that education played an important role in their lives and opportunities (Mutoro 1997). A local woman from a non-governmental organization also stressed that lack of basic education—the key to human development, equal opportunities and resource utilization—was a major problem facing the women.⁹

The Tweyambe Group women were able to obtain training with support from the Fisheries Department, donor agencies, individuals and other organizations. This included training on group management and

leadership roles, accounting management procedures, gear theft management and gender awareness. Access was mostly limited to a few members, especially the leaders. However, the leaders would convey the information they received to the others, in Kiswahili (the language spoken all over Tanzania) and Haya, thereby distributing, to some extent, the knowledge they had acquired. They believed that teaching one another and trusting that they could all perform various duties helped the Tweyambe Group survive in a competitive environment.

Members of the Tweyambe Group perceived themselves as having primary responsibility for the economic well being of their families. Because of their responsibilities at home and at work, it was hard for them to find time for their group activities.¹⁰ The women thus looked for ways to create some free time for themselves, e.g., the nursery school. Rules and incentives, such as a bonus fish to the person who arranges for crewmembers' food and orchestrates fish sales at the landing, have helped to ensure that members fulfil their roles within the group. There is a schedule of activities that defines how each member uses her time, ensuring that each allocates time for group activities as well as for her farming and domestic work. The women expressed the feeling that they had achieved what they had through dedication and the amount of time each has invested in the Group.

In contrast, women who work in fish processing factories have had little opportunity to budget their own time. In all six factories we studied, women work both day and night shifts. They are hired as casual labourers and are thus denied access to holidays and maternity leave. Some women factory workers have reportedly quarrelled with, and even divorced, their partners in order to comply with the factory rules, while others have found it difficult to marry because men would not accept them working night shifts or taking time away from their household duties (Medard et al. 2002).

Tweyambe Group members have adopted a strategy of income diversification to protect their households from hunger. When income from their fish business is down, the women (independently) sell *matoke*, groundnuts, cassava, yams, second-hand clothes, tea and "burns" (candies), fresh beans and sweet potatoes at the village market. They also travel long distances to the beaches in the early morning and sit under the trees with their commodities for exchange, waiting for fishermen to come off the Lake. Intense competition for fish has encouraged the women to resort to bartering for other, non-fish products along the beaches. Firewood, fruits, tomatoes, maize and cassava flour are commonly exchanged for fish, and bargaining is common. These independent activities, the women argue, have helped their husbands and children understand that the Tweyambe Fishing Group is not an extension of their households which can be exploited, but a separate entity. Economic hardship and the important role these women play in supporting their households have changed men's attitudes. Group members say that men have realized that they can no

longer provide for their families by themselves, and that the prevailing economic conditions are forcing both men and women to devise strategies for mutual survival. However, problems persist. One woman commented:

When we buy and prepare the meals, pay school fees, buy clothes for the children and sometimes buy small gifts as a surprise, men see it and realize our potential, although they don't appreciate it. Quietly, they feel offended by our initiative.¹¹

Tweyambe Group members continue to depend on men for many things, including advice and access to fish. Although the group has gained local respect through their association with donor agencies and the government, this association and their financial success and investments have also caused jealousy and other conflicts in the community. Women from polygamous households sometimes complained that it was difficult for their husbands to care for all of their wives and children, and because of that, some wives were neglected and had to work extra hard to bring up their children.¹² Some of the men in Ruhanga have demanded full involvement in their women's Nile perch fishing activities, defining it as a project for the entire community, both members and non-members. Men have also tried to participate in the selection of crewmembers and engine operators. Members' husbands have demanded to know the exact income of the women's group and have interfered with planning and operations related to their investments. In Vihiga District of Kenya, Mutoro (1997) found that many of the men who belonged to, or were associated with, women's groups as "advisors" were considered to be "crafty" and "sly."

Further research is needed to investigate issues of concern to women's groups in Kagera, including how to increase women's economic productivity, reduce the burden of their household responsibilities, increase their participation in decision making and give them more access to, and control of, resources. Such research might enhance the potential for co-management, not only of fisheries, but also of wetlands, forests and land use in general.

Conclusion

Lake Victoria's fisheries and fishing communities have moved from reliance on local markets, equipment and sources of capital to reliance on export markets, external equipment suppliers and external sources of funding. The move has affected, and been mediated by, gender relations. Globalization has opened up new opportunities for some women, but it has also undermined many women's economic independence and increased the challenges they face in supporting themselves and their families. It has done this by contributing to environmental degradation, by undermining women's access to fish for processing and trading, by enhancing competition and theft in

fishing and trading, and by ghettoizing women in the poorer paid occupations in fish plants as contingent, vulnerable workers.¹³ As in other parts of the world, the gendered division of labour in the households and communities of Ruhanga has persisted. Ruhanga's women continue to play a major role in the maintenance of their families through their contribution to household subsistence.

Most development efforts in Tanzania, as in other countries (Davis and Gerrard 2000a; Gerrard 1995; Husmo 1999; Munk-Madsen 1998), have tended to discount the contributions of women to the economy and society, thus failing to mobilize this vital human resource. The ideas that those who fish are *fishermen* and that fishing predominantly involves men going fishing in boats have rarely been challenged by the institutions involved in Tanzania's fisheries. Women are thought to engage only in post-harvest activities (smoking, drying and marketing), where they earn less than fishers, particularly those with fishing equipment and gear.

This case study of the Tweyambe Fishing Enterprise shows the importance of integrating women into fishery programs and development projects, including those related to fishing—in ways that address women's dual responsibility for income generation and family care. Programs aimed at achieving sustainable resource management should build women's interests into their design. Women must have a more prominent role in agricultural and fisheries production strategies addressing food security, particularly in the African setting. Evidence from the research confirms the value of the Tweyambe Group to its members and to the larger community. Members reported that face-to-face interaction allowed them to get to know one other, to build a reputation and to develop mutual trust. Openness on the part of members helped them to resolve small conflicts within the group. In many cases, they managed to separate project and individual activities, thereby helping to insulate the group from wider household pressures. These features of the Group point to its relevance for community organization initiatives, such as co-management regimes, for solving the larger-scale economic and social challenges to fishing communities affected by globalization. As De Cremer and Van Vugt (1998) argue, when collective identity is reinforced by personal identity, people will be more willing to pursue collective welfare. The Tweyambe Group appears to have encouraged this shift and, in so doing, has enhanced the ability of its members to work hand-in-hand to tackle critical problems.

The benefits accruing to the community as a whole from the activities of the Tweyambe Fishing Enterprise cannot be over-emphasized. The Tanzanian government and other agencies need to do more to support such women's groups in their attempts to break through the constraints they face, particularly in an industry dependent on export markets and global processes. These agencies should support women not just in income-earning opportunities but also in advocacy, mobilization in the public

sphere and empowerment. Women's voices must be heard in the major decision-making processes, not just in a small, isolated "women's office" within these agencies. Evidence from elsewhere suggests that when extension services work with more women's groups, they not only double their reach but also reduce their costs, resulting in greater food security for rural families (Herz 1988). A gender-sensitive approach to development, one that assesses and monitors the impact of rules and regulations at all levels on women, men and gender relations is more than a political imperative. It is, in fact, a basic condition of sustainable economic and social progress (UNDP 1995).

Notes

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2. A *kitongoji* normally comprises 150–200 families.
3. Fisheries Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, Dar Es Salaam.
4. Kisinda Manugwa, ninety-nine-year-old male resident of Namasabo, a fishing village on Ukerewe Island. Personal interview. June 16, 2001.
5. At the time of the study, US\$1 was equivalent to T.Shs. 800.
6. Thadeus Buberwa, Cooperative Officer, Bukoba District, Kagera. Personal interview. December 15, 1999.
7. Jovita Jastine, Tweyambe Fishing Group Chairperson, Ruhanga-Muleba District. Personal interview. December 15, 1999.
8. Tweyambe Fishing Group Financial Report, October 1999.
9. Leokadia Mtagonda, Chairperson, Mwanza Women Development Association, Mwanza. Personal interview. December 4, 1999.
10. In Tanzania, women work an average of 3,069 hours per year compared with 1,829 hours for men. They have to manage productive activities along with the maintenance of their households (Sigot 1995).
11. Alfredina Mtoizi, Secretary, Tweyambe Fishing Group, Ruhanga-Muleba District. Personal interview. December 15, 1999.
12. Claudia Gabone, Ruhanga-Muleba District. Personal interview. December 16, 1999.
13. The gender division of labour in Tanzania's plants is similar to that in industrial fish processing elsewhere (Davis and Gerrard 2000a; Gerrard 1995; Husmo 1999).

Life and Debt¹

Excerpts from an interview with Selvaraji a woman fish vendor from Kerala, India, who describes her life and the problems she has had to deal with, by M.G. Indu of ICSF's Documentation Centre:

My name is Selvaraji from Vizhinjam. We are here for the last eighteen years. My husband is a fisherman. I have four children: two boys and two girls.

I was a housewife but for the past three years I have been going to the harbour after the situation at home became worse. I buy fish and sell it at the local market. From what I earn I run the house. When only my husband earns, it is not enough to educate our children and other needs.

I normally leave home at 5:00 a.m., buy the fish, wash it and pack it with ice, and reach the market by 8:00 a.m. Then I wait till 10:30 a.m. when the customers start to arrive. If all the fish is sold, I reach home by 12:00 noon. If not I return at about 2:00 p.m. I bring home the unsold fish packed with ice.

When the landings are poor, I have to go to the harbour really early—at 2:00 a.m.—to buy the fish, wash it and pack it with ice. I return home by 5:00 a.m. and do the housework. There is no time to sleep again. I have to sweep and wash vessels and do the other work. I go back to the harbour by 9:00 a.m. to wait for the *tempo* (small vehicle used to carry goods) to take us to the market.

When there is a lot of fish I have to dry and salt it. Until it is sold and the money recovered there will not be any peace of mind. Till it is sold, the money is in the water.

To buy fish worth Rs1,000 (Rs45=US\$1) at the auction, I have to pay Rs20 as auction fees. Rs10 goes to the church and Rs5 per basket to pay those who load it into the *tempos*. One piece of ice costs Rs25. That is already Rs60. For Rs2,000 worth of fish it is Rs120. After that we have to get the baskets transported to the markets. Whether it is three, four or seven of us, it is Rs40 by *tempo*. We share this fare. After that when we reach the market we have to give a market fee of Rs5 per basket—it is the same whether the basket is full or half. If we do not pay, they start to abuse us.

Thus I have to spend about Rs150 as external expenses. So if I want to make some margin, I have to sell the fish bought for Rs2,000 for Rs2,500. Only then I can make about Rs300 at the end of the day and repay my debt. Otherwise I will get into more debts.

Although I have been vending fish for three years, the money is not

mine. It is a loan from the *blade* (moneylender). I have been in debt for almost two years now. What happened was that I had with me Rs5,000 that belonged to someone else. While travelling in a bus I somehow lost this money. For the next four days I did not eat anything, not knowing how to return the money. It was then that someone told me about the moneylender. I took a loan of Rs5,000. I got only Rs4,500, since they cut the interest of 10 percent and give us only the rest of the amount.

Then I borrowed Rs500 from another woman to return the Rs5,000. I had to repay the loan by giving Rs70 each day for about eighty days. But this was difficult. So to repay I took another Rs5,000 loan. Thus it became Rs10,000. Last week the moneylender came asking for this money. I told him I could not repay immediately, but I will repay it slowly. So when my husband got Rs400 one day, all of it went as repayment. Now I have to repay the rest.

Now I am thinking that once I clear all the loans, I should not go after the moneylenders. I have suffered so much because of their loans. There are days when I do earn money from selling fish. If I did not have to repay the loan I would have been able to save some money. Now I realize that whatever loans I took from them was of no use to me; it made me more poor.

Initially when I started selling fish, I had some savings. Once when my husband and son fell sick, all that money was spent. It was only after that, that I started going after the moneylenders. If I had not taken the loan, by now I would have had a saving of Rs5000. But today I am not even able to thatch this house.

My mother was a fish vendor. That is the reason why I am in this line. There are losses, there are profits. Losses and debts should not deter one. As long as you have life in you, you can repay your debts—that is the thought that makes me go ahead.

In any case, from my own experience as well as from that of other women fish vendors, I can say that women benefit by getting into vending. Even if they earn a pittance, they supplement the income brought in by men. That is a gain. Another thing is that some women do not have their men with them. In Vizhinjam itself there are many women who became widows at a very young age. So they go to sell fish to bring up their children with the profits made from this.

Also, before I started selling fish I had to listen to all that my husband said. When I talk to other women vendors, they also tell similar stories. So, when we think, we realize that it was because we did not have any earnings that we had to listen to the men. So today, in fact I work harder than my husband and I am able to make him understand the worth of my work. I have the confidence to do that now. Only when we women share about our lives, we realize the similar threads running through them. Most women in this area are fish vendors. There is nobody in this world who can beat a fish vending woman!

Note

1. This chapter was originally published in *Yemaya* 5, December 2000, a feminist newsletter from the ICSF.

Section Three

GENDER, RACE, RIGHTS AND GLOBALIZING FISHERIES

Migrating to Survive¹

This case study of women crabmeat processors from the Mexican state of Tabasco who opt to migrate to the U.S., despite the difficulties they face, is excerpted from a presentation by Laura Vidal, Co-ordinator of the St. Thomas Ecological Association of Women, Mexico, for the "Workshop on Gender and Coastal Fishing Communities in Latin America" organized in June 2000 in Brazil.

The migration of Mexican men and women to the U.S. has been documented since the end of the last century, but not for those who come from the Mexican southeast, specifically from the coastal areas of the state of Tabasco. The majority of Tabascan women, who initiated the migration to North Carolina, come from the municipalities of Paraíso and Jalapa de Méndez. The migration process is linked to the establishment of Mariscos Boca de México in the Chiltepec municipality of Paraíso. This company was set up in 1986 with the objective of exporting fresh and natural crabmeat to the U.S.

According to the migrant crabmeat processors, the majority of the employees of this company come from Jalpa de Méndez because the women of Chiltepec no longer want to work for the company since it became *gringo*-owned. The people of the Chiltepec community like neither the company nor its owner, and they make fun of the women who work there. They call them stinky because of the strong odour of crab that they give off at the end of the workday.

The migration process was initiated in 1989 when twenty-four female crabmeat processors, who used to work for Mariscos Boca de México, decided to go to work in North Carolina. Under authority of the owner of the company, a U.S. agent initiated the process of contracting crabmeat processors to work in American plants.

The first women migrants were highly criticized in the Chiltepec community, and people would comment that the women certainly went there to become prostitutes and that they would never return to their homes. When the migrants returned after the first season and brought money with them, more confidence was generated for the migration in the second year.

From November to March women work in the Chiltepec plant and then migrate to North Carolina for the April to November season. There are five companies in North Carolina that contract the Tabascan women for crabmeat processing—the biggest one contracting up to 150 women. It is estimated that since 1989 some one thousand Tabascan women have made the journey to work in the crabmeat processing plants of North Carolina. In the U.S., there are also other crabmeat processing plants, not related to Mariscos Boca de Mexico, where the work environment is less stressful than in the plants where the Tabascan women work.

The hiring process depends upon the requirements of each company. The selection of employees is based on their workplace capability—according to the contract they must be able to process at least twenty-four pounds daily. At the same time, the person must be able to meet the legal requirements, including having a passport. Potential employees must also have the resources to pay for a visa, their air travel and their stay (food, lodging and uniform) and must have the recommendation of someone recognized by Mariscos Boca de México. Finally, they must promise to be “well behaved.” The companies commonly provide medical insurance to the crabmeat processors.

The majority of women crabmeat processors are married with children. Their schooling consists of a few grades of primary education. The women assert that the main reasons that lead them to migrate are: to complement the resources of the family unit, to avoid having their children quit school, economic necessity and to improve their housing. They comment that the principal problems that arise from their absence from the home are: their husband’s anger over the abandonment of his children, his infidelity and an increase in his consumption of alcohol. “I don’t travel any more because of my children and because my husband, X, doesn’t want me to. He would tell me off because his son was arriving from high school in Aquiles Serdán at one a.m. in the morning. In the first year he told me that he wanted me to go, but when I was there he told me that this would be the last year.” Or, “When I returned, my husband was worse because he was always drinking. He would drink for a month and they’d put him in jail.”

Living conditions in North Carolina vary depending on the employing plant. The conditions of housing and services provided are inadequate. Some migrants rent rooms, but the majority are housed in trailers with rooms where eight to ten people live. They eat in dining rooms where they must stand in long lines to get the food. Their recreation consists of going out in groups supervised by the company. There are also companies that do not let their workers go beyond certain boundaries. “Up there it’s like a prison. You have to line up. There are 140 people waiting to eat. There were only four televisions to watch.” Or, “We would go out on Sunday. They would take us in groups of fifteen to twenty people to go shopping.”

It is interesting to note that these conditions simultaneously foster

solidarity and mutual support as well as competition and conflict. Frequently, groups are organized in order to alternate tasks like cooking, cleaning of rooms and being around in cases of illness or depression. Conflict is related to difficult living conditions—fights over use of bathrooms, cleaning of areas—and the competition to levels of output in piece-work.

Migrant women note that the workdays that go on for so long, as much in the Chiltepec, Tabasco, plant as in North Carolina, are exhausting. However, the economic reward is significantly different. In North Carolina the pay is by piece-work and varies between US\$1.28 and US\$1.60 per pound of crabmeat. Some say that they can do up to sixty pounds a day and earn an average of US\$1,000 every two weeks. In Mexico they are paid a monthly salary of 800 pesos, the equivalent of US\$80. Of course, it must be remembered that the women need to pay sizeable sums in rent and food (approximately US\$40 and US\$21 a week respectively), cover some health expenses and pay the costs of travel and the accompanying paperwork.

In spite of the difficult working conditions, the majority of migrant women express a preference for working in the U.S. The economic reasons for this preference are very important, but they are not the only reasons. Women also experience a heightened sense of self-esteem. “My husband wouldn’t take me into consideration. Now, I told him that if he doesn’t shape up he can leave, but I’m staying in the U.S. I achieved my goal in spite of what my husband says.”

Note

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Globalizing Fisheries in an Historical Context

The Salmon Canning Industry of British Columbia

Alicja Muszynski

This chapter treats race, class and gender as central factors in the formation of a “cheap wage” labour force in the British Columbia fisheries (Muszynski 1996). From this vantage point, we can consider the place of race, class and gender within globalizing fisheries today. The chapter describes the ruptures and continuities in the lives and societies of First Nations, Chinese men and Japanese men and women associated with the industrialization of salmon processing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—historical antecedents of similar ruptures and continuities that followed the shutting down of salmon canneries at the end of the twentieth century.

The salmon canning industry provides a relevant case study because, from its inception, labour forces were racialized and gendered, with workers paid according to race and gender. Historical documents (press clippings, fisheries reports, Indian agent reports and Royal Commission testimony) on the salmon fishery contain a clearly racialized and gendered discourse. These categories were used to differentiate the type of labourer suited for particular types of work. The inferiority of women, especially non-white women, was assumed (Muszynski 1996). But following World War II, British Columbia fish workers were among the first in the world to unionize regionally rather than locally and sporadically, and they achieved high wage rates, although the right to equal pay for work of equal value took decades longer to attain. The struggles of the men and women in these fish plants hold important lessons for fish workers around the world, especially in light of the mobility of both capital and fish. They show the central role of the search for cheap wage labour in the capitalist development of the world’s fisheries. This case study also shows that a “critical and committed globalization theory” must include historical examples and case studies of actual labour conditions as well as of resistance and struggle. The chapter begins by examining race and gender in the history of the salmon canning industry and the development of a relatively inclusive union movement. This is followed by a discussion of globalization as a factor in the decline of the industry and the persistence of colonial relations with First Nations. The chapter concludes by arguing the importance of historical context for understanding the present-day racialized and gendered impacts of globalization.

Racialized and Gendered Wage Labour in the Salmon Canning Industry

Salmon canning coincided with the creation of British Columbia as a province of Canada in 1871. In the decades leading to this west-east political union, the gold rush from California northwards (British Columbia's Fraser River gold rush began in 1858) had oriented the future province towards the United States. San Francisco "was the metropolis of a region that included British Columbia in its hinterland" (Ralston 1981: 296). The gold rush had helped open the frontier to white settlement, rendering the administration of colonial affairs by fur trading companies untenable. As white male settlers entered the territory, the economic potential of its resources, coupled with a race with the United States to secure a landmass from the Atlantic to the Pacific, added fuel to the argument for Confederation with Canada. Canada's completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1886 was in large measure a political strategy to secure access to the Pacific Ocean. As the railway terminus, Vancouver became the provincial metropolitan centre, usurping the maritime city of Victoria on Vancouver Island (McDonald 1981). Prince Rupert, in northern British Columbia, also emerged as a railway terminus.

The entry of British Columbia into Canadian Confederation signalled the exploitation of its abundant resources, including forestry, mining and fisheries. By the end of the nineteenth century, salmon canning had become a major industry and an integral component of the province's economic growth. Vancouver is close to the Fraser River, New Westminster and Steveston are nearby on the Fraser, and Prince Rupert is proximate to the Skeena and Nass rivers. These rivers were major destinations for the five species of Pacific salmon, and the sockeye salmon became the preferred species of the canning industry. A market for canned salmon was found among the proletariat in Western Europe, particularly among the British working class. A biography of one of the pioneer salmon canners notes that through "the efforts of the Todds as well as others in the industry, canned salmon became a popular food, particularly in Great Britain, where it was known as the 'working man's feast'" (Anderson 1990: 1063).

Britain, in 1867 the world's leading industrial state, was the manufacturing country least able to feed itself because of its limited land area and growing population. Canning was only part of a general process by which such industrial states extended the area of the world from which they drew their food and raw materials. (Ralston 1981: 299)

Thus, in the late nineteenth century the economic imperatives of Great Britain fuelled the impetus to develop British Columbia's rich resources—including its salmon resources—which at the time were considered limitless in their potential. Race, class and gender were factors in the exertion of

control over the industrialization of the fisheries and the marketing of finished products. When salmon canning began, the “white” population, especially women and the working classes, was insufficient to supply the cheap wage labour required for seasonal cannery processing. Aboriginal women were recruited to some of these jobs.

Prior to European contact, the territory that became British Columbia is estimated to have had a population of 300,000 to 400,000, the densest north of Mexico (Tennant 1990):

At the time the whites arrived there were more than thirty separate aboriginal groups in what would become British Columbia. Each had a unique linguistic and cultural identity, as well as a name for itself and a territory which it made use of. The groups were as distinct from one another as were the various European nations of the time. While several of the smaller groups died out after contact, most survived. (Tennant 1990: 4)

The fisheries played a central role in the lives of northwest coast peoples for centuries. More than a staple in their diet, salmon figured importantly in their art and their founding stories and myths—in short, in people’s representations of who they were and how they were connected to one another and to the spirit and animal world that surrounded them and provided them with life. Thus, when Europeans began to establish an industry based on the exploitation of the sockeye salmon, they were encroaching not only on the economies of the First Nations but also on their politics, cultures and religions.

Prior to Confederation, the fur trading companies relied on dried salmon provisions from Aboriginal peoples as a major staple at fur-trading forts and in overseas locations such as the Sandwich Islands (later Hawaii). Upon Confederation, federal government agents were sent to the new province to carry out a census of the First Nations and to establish reserves. However, the Province of British Columbia consistently refused to recognize or honour any claims to land or resources made by the First Nations. Where necessary, force was used in drawing boundary lines. While federal government policy was to isolate First Nations on reserves, the provincial government sought to assimilate them:

The policy of the Dominion aims at a *concentration of the Indians upon Reserves*, while that of the Crown Colony, besides granting Reserves in cases where the Indians preferred them, courted rather the opposite result. The Colonial Policy was first inaugurated under the auspices of the Imperial Government in 1858, the date of the foundation of the Crown Colony. Under this policy the Natives were invited and encouraged to mingle with and live amongst the

white population with a view to weaning them by degrees from savage life, and of gradually leading them by example and precept to adopt habits of peace, honesty, and industry. (British Columbia 1876: 58; emphasis in original)

The canneries were built close to the largest salmon streams and rivers. Sometimes canneries were built directly on land occupied by First Nations; at other times, Aboriginal villages relocated to the cannery grounds during the height of the salmon runs to take advantage of cash employment. The cannery sent recruiters to the villages, but Aboriginal labourers proved to be problematic. If employment in other industries, like sawmills or hop growing, was more lucrative, the cannery would lose their labour force. In addition, the First Nations subsistence and trading economies survived, albeit in truncated form. While money became an important source of economic support, for buying staples like flour and sugar, non-monetary economic activities such as fishing, berry picking and hunting continued to be significant.

Over the course of the twentieth century, First Nations women adapted cannery labour to their work cycles. In our visits to salmon canneries in Prince Rupert in the mid-1980s, we talked to women who could trace their family histories through the various canneries where previous generations of women had worked. After the end of the nineteenth century, canneries were consolidated in Prince Rupert in the north and Steveston in the south, with ones on remote areas being closed. Closure of plants was devastating, not only because it cut off a fundamental source of employment, especially for women, but also because cannery work had become part of the coastal communities' identities. The seniority lists at the Prince Rupert and Steveston canneries demonstrate the longevity of First Nations female employment: several had worked there for twenty, thirty and even forty years.

Many women began their employment histories as girls working alongside their mothers and other female relatives. Oral histories have been collected over the years; for example, Leona Sparrow (1976) recorded the work histories of her Coast Salish grandparents. Numerous works containing oral accounts have been published; for example, Steltzer and Kerr's *Coast of Many Faces* (1982). Cannery work has become part of the collective histories and stories of the First Nations. The experiences of decades of cannery work have entered the collective consciousness and representations of First Nations women.

Alongside the First Nations and a small, mostly male white population, there was also a significant number of Chinese men who came from California or directly from China to work the placer mines during the gold rush. "Between 1881 and 1884 over fifteen thousand entered the port of Victoria, mainly from China and San Francisco" (Barman 1991: 107). This

group became a crucial source of labour in the salmon canning industry, partly because First Nations labourers were neither docile nor subservient, prompting salmon canners to search for more tractable employees. George W. Hume may have been the first salmon canner to employ Chinese labour, in 1872, at his cannery in Oregon (Cobb 1930). The Honourable Justice Crease of the British Columbia Supreme Court explained why Aboriginal people were not preferred as labourers:

The Indians could not be depended upon at first on account of their numbers, which in those days were threatening, nor afterwards on account of their restless, nomadic propensities, which prevented them from settling down to any permanent, industrious avocations. (Canada 1885: 142)

Chinese migrants were “part of a great overseas diaspora that resulted from the convergence of two major historical forces: a rural crisis in China and Western imperialism” (Tan and Roy 1985: 3). Those who sought employment overseas belonged to the peasant classes, impoverished through Western imperialism and the internal political and economic disintegration of the southern Chinese provinces. Migrants came predominantly from the southern coastal provinces of Guangdong and Fujian. Both areas were subjected to Western efforts to break down cultural and commercial barriers surrounding China from the early nineteenth century. Canton, Guangdong’s capital, was the point of contact with European commerce before the First Opium War in 1819. It was through the treaty ports of Guangdong and Fujian, and the British and Portuguese possessions of Hong Kong and Macau, that Chinese went abroad. Most of these Chinese migrants came from a small area of eight contiguous counties in the heart of the Canton delta (Wickberg 1982).

The Chinese who came to the U.S. and Canada at this time were mostly men. Nineteenth-century China was a patriarchal society governed by a Confucian ideology that subordinated women to men from birth to death. Women could not own property, hold political office or play an important role in religious worship. In times of economic distress, men sought to continue the family lineage by gaining wage employment and by emigrating overseas, while women were killed in infancy, married off at an early age or sold into slavery (McCunn 1988; Yung 1987).

During the mid-nineteenth century, when Chinese immigrants began coming to America in large numbers, Chinese women were destined to perform household duties, marry and bear sons, and serve their husbands and in-laws. Dutiful wives were left at home to tend to the family while their husbands went overseas in search of fortune. (Yung 1987: 11)

Chinese immigrant workers in the British Columbia salmon canneries became situated in the provincial labour force in a paradoxical way. In North America, Chinese men encountered an ideology that viewed them as both inferior and subservient, and consequently were employed in jobs that had been designated as women's work. This followed a historical pattern produced by European patriarchy that was established in European factory work dating back to the seventeenth century (Clark 1982; Rowbotham 1976). In two Royal Commissions, published in 1885 and 1902 on the subject of first Chinese, and subsequently Chinese and Japanese, immigration, cannery owners testified repeatedly that they preferred white women on the plant assembly lines. Since most European migrants were male, these were in short supply, so they hired Chinese men. The racialized "other" (Chinese men) filled the gap, at least until white women began migrating in larger numbers to the province.

The term "cheap wage labour" was used in testimony to the two Royal Commissions (Canada 1885 and 1902) and to the 1893 British Columbia Fishery Commission Report (Canada 1893). It was labour that white men did not want to undertake because it was disagreeable and priced at a level that did not allow them to marry and support families. Chinese and Japanese men could fill these positions because they had immigrated as "solitary males" and were not perceived by the white population as committed to remaining in the province. Many white men testified to the 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration (Canada 1885) that positions like those in the salmon canneries would be ideally suited for white women and white children, thus allowing settlement of British Columbia by a white proletariat, which would in turn help industrialize the province with an indigenous (white and Aboriginal) labour force. Point Four of the resume in this Royal Commission states:

That the Chinese do largely engross domestic service.... [W]hite girls cannot be induced to go into the country, removed from their church and accustomed companionship, to work as domestics, and that a sufficient supply can not be had even for cities and towns; that the fact that the Chinese compete with female servants is, nevertheless, one well worthy of the attention of Government. (Canada 1885: cxxx)

The migration of Chinese male labourers followed the abolition of the slave trade in the U.S., but there was an interim system similar to the trade in slaves, referred to as the "coolie system," which only ended when China legalized emigration (Wolf 1982). The U.S. was interested in China as a source of cheap labour, and in 1868, it signed the Burlingame Treaty with China. A most-favoured-nation clause in the treaty favoured Britain and its former colonies.

The contract labour system demanded more accountability than the coolie traffic (which saw hundreds of indentured workers die of scurvy, malnutrition or flogging en route to the New World), if for no reason other than that the investment outlay was greater. The worker's value was also considerably higher because he had signed on by choice and was travelling as a free emigrant. After 1870, the contract type of labour was the only legal way a Chinese labourer could work in British colonies and former colonies. (Chan 1983: 45)

The Chinese contract system served salmon canners well, providing them with a labour force that would remain on site and available no matter what the hours, which ranged from no work to twenty-four hours a day. The contractor paid his crews at the end of the season, relieving the employer of the need to hire and pay individual employees. In their testimonies to the Royal Commissions of 1885 and 1902, salmon canners and others affirmed that without the Chinese, the provincial salmon canning industry could not have developed.

The canners provided Chinese crews with bunkhouses in which conditions were crowded and abysmal. The bunks had little room between them, and the facilities (toilets often merely holes in the ground) were generally inadequate for the number of men using them. White male employees and their families had the best accommodation, in cottages set aside for them on the grounds. First Nations labourers and fishers lived in their own groups, either in tents or in accommodations provided by canners. Several families were often crowded into a two- or three-bedroom cottage. At each cannery, the living accommodations mirrored the racial segregation inside plants and on fishing grounds, the quarters of each group separated from those of other groups (Insurers' Advisory Organization 1923).

Beginning as general labourers, Chinese men quickly became experts in a number of operations along the canning line, especially the butchering of fish. Later, the fish butchering machine was specifically designed for the salmon canneries. Early versions of these machines carried nameplates identifying them as an "Iron Chink." The Smith butchering machine, first introduced in 1906, eventually allowed two operators to perform the work formerly done by fifty-one expert Chinese butchers (Stacey 1982).

History puts to rest the stereotype of the Chinese labourer as passive and docile. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Chinese cannery workers organized one of the first unions in the industry, to prevent contractors from absconding without paying their wages. Aware of their work as skilled labour, the men also began to demand higher wages. Canners responded by mechanizing these areas of work, while government officials and others tried to bar Chinese immigration.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, virulent racism led to calls to close the province to immigrants from China, Japan and India.

Despite the historic presence of the First Nations—or perhaps partly because of it—the local press loudly proclaimed British Columbia to be a “white man’s” province (Roy 1989; Ward 1978). The discourse can be read as a struggle over the ethnic identity of those who would lead the province, as politicians and industrialists, since capitalism as such is not tied to “whiteness.”

Witnesses testifying to the two Royal Commissions were asked to provide personal background details. Government documents such as these are rich in the use of racial terms. Salmon canners were referred to as “whitemen” who came to Canada from the U.S. and the British Isles. The social construction, “whiteman,” was considered the dominant economic and political force. Concerted efforts were made to attract European immigrants and to keep out “undesirable” races (people from China, Japan and India). Canners claimed that the continued employment of Chinese men was a deterrent to white women settling in the province, because the traditional female areas of employment, such as cannery work, were closed to them. Clearly, most cannery employers did not envision white women working alongside Chinese men on the lines. The evidence also suggests that First Nations women might perform the same tasks in the northern canneries as Chinese men did in the Fraser River plants.

The white population of British Columbia at the turn of the century made few distinctions between Chinese and Japanese residents, lumping them together as “orientals” or “asiatics,” as distinct from “whites” (a racial category current in the popular imagination and local press). A chief characteristic attributed by “whites” to “orientals” was their acceptance of wages on which the former could not survive. Japanese men began to immigrate in large numbers in the late nineteenth century when Western imperialism forced open Japan to emigration (Muszynski 1996; Adachi 1976). Chinese labourers perceived them as a threat, because Japanese contractors undercut the wages of Chinese, as well as white male, workers. The Japanese did not compete with the Chinese in the canning industry, however, since the original Japanese immigrants were fishers and continued in this line of work. It was not long, however, before they began to send to Japan for brides and Japanese women began working in fish plants. However, they took jobs already designated as “women’s work,” such as filleting and manually filling cans, both paid on a piece rate basis. First Nations women working on the Fraser River appear to have avoided these types of jobs, preferring to receive hourly wages for tasks such as washing fish (Sparrow 1976). At this time the number of Chinese men in the industry was declining (head taxes and eventually the Chinese Exclusion Act cut the number of immigrants from China). Chinese men already had been doing what was designated “women’s work.” Now machines displaced them and remaining jobs in fish plants designated “women’s work” came to be done by women—immigrant women and First Nations women.

While the Chinese were described as a “feminine” race and judged to be taking jobs away from white women and children, thus hindering the establishment of working-class families in British Columbia, the Japanese were referred to as a “manly” race. Joseph D. Graham, a government agent based in Atlin, testified to the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration:

The Japanese are a little cheaper than the Chinese. I would rather deal with them. They are a more manly class of people. They purchase goods from our ordinary tradesmen. They have more of the western method about them. Everybody has his own idea. I draw my own conclusions from what I have seen of the Japanese: that they are a more manly race of people, and I have always drawn that conclusion. I have only met a few of the Japanese. Those I have met have been more manly than the Chinese. I cannot speak of them as a race. (Canada 1902: 375–76)

Clive P. Wolley, former executive officer of the B.C. Sanitary Commission, described the Japanese as willing to “live as a white man does,” more likely to assimilate and more “manly and gentlemanly.” But he is, therefore, “a more dangerous competitor with the white man”:

He adapts himself more easily to our civilization than the Chinese. The Chinese will do the lowest kind of labour and stick to it. The Japanese will get higher if he can, and he has brains enough to rise into any of the mechanical pursuits. (Canada 1902: 376)

But it was not only the white population that perceived the Japanese as a direct threat. One section of the 1902 Royal Commission Report is entitled “Protests of Indian Chiefs.” An example of the types of concerns being raised is the testimony of Chief James Harry of the Squamish Indians, who represented seven chiefs:

The Japanese are cutting all the wood we have here in British Columbia and bolts on the north arm, Howe Sound, and here in Vancouver on the west side, and our people have no chance to go to work and cut the cedar. They used to cut the cedar and bolts and wood. The Japanese cut wood for too little—just like for nothing. My people worked in the mills; now have no chance. The Japanese work for about \$15 a month—not enough to buy clothes and keep wife and family. I have a wife and three children. Thirteen and fourteen years ago the Indians got \$1.50 and \$1.25 working in the mills; now they get no chance to go to work. The Japanese live on a tablespoon of rice and a little perch. We are not the same. I think

the Indians and whites as good as the Japanese. The Japanese build boats cheap and make oars. We make sails, boats and oars and everything. Our women get work in the canneries, they get \$1, \$1.25, \$1.15, \$1.10, depends on what they do. Boys and girls get work when plenty of fish. We do hand-logging in winter. We do stevedoring, make good wages but not steady. I think you could get enough whites and Indians to do the work. There are a little more than 10,000 Indians, men, women and children, engaged in fishing. (Canada 1902: 346)

Chief Harry's testimony reveals the extent to which the economies of the First Nations had become intertwined with, and dependent on, capitalist wage relations, as well as the complex intertwining of race and labour. The competition for jobs was phrased in racial terms, but it was also clear that the ability of any one group, or "race," to undermine the wages of another depended on its ability to survive at the lowest possible wages. And wages were determined, in the last instance, by capitalist employers.

While fishing and fish processing had long been central in the coastal First Nations economies, the relations of paid labour altered certain of their economic relationships. However, they retained some independence due to continued reliance on Aboriginal relations of production. Rights of access to the food fisheries allowed them more choice in deciding to engage in paid wage labour, making them an "unreliable" labour pool in the eyes of some canners. Chinese contract labourers had no choice but to remain on site and work until the end of the season, and they were recruited on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border. Japanese immigrants began to enter the province near the end of the nineteenth century, and the men became expert fishers and boat builders. They began to send for wives. Since these were years of tightened immigration control in Canada, often the only way that Japanese women could enter the country was if they had no relatives residing here. Many of these women initially helped their husbands on fishing boats, as had First Nations women, because most boats were gillnetters requiring two fishers to handle them. Since cannery bunkhouses were reserved only for men (Skogan 1983), Japanese couples had to search for accommodation elsewhere. In the south, this was relatively easy: Steveston was developing as a fishing village with a large Japanese community, and Japanese women took on cannery and other fish work there.

Ethnicity, Gender and Unionization

In the twentieth century, the salmon canning plants were gradually dismantled, relocated, rebuilt and consolidated into major multi-processing operations in the urban centres of Vancouver and Prince Rupert. Trends in financial control of the industry mirrored global patterns of development. Small, locally owned plants, requiring relatively little capital investment,

were bought and consolidated with larger ones. The British Columbia Packers' Association of New Jersey, Ltd. (B.C. Packers) was formed in 1902, absorbing twenty-two existing firms and gaining control, in its first year of operation, of half of the Fraser River sockeye pack (Reid 1981).

In this industry, remuneration—the class component—was built into the racialized and gendered discourses and this was manifested in labour struggles in various forms (Muszynski 1986). The history of union activity in the British Columbia fisheries in the twentieth century is one of workers struggling with employers and union organizers to be included in union agreements, despite their ethnicity, race or gender. Unionization among fishers was fraught with struggles over gear types, with racial hostility flaring up among white, Japanese and First Nations male fishers. Communist organizers recognized that in order to bargain effectively with the corporate-owned plants, their strength lay not on the waters but inside the plants.

In 1945, the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union (UFAWU) was founded, the first industrial trade union to cover an entire regional industry in the fisheries (Muszynski 1984 and 1987). The emergence of the UFAWU as the basic labour negotiator spelled the end of the Chinese contract system in its most blatant manifestations. The system persisted until around 1949, when union agreements gradually began to replace it, although remnants continued until well into the 1980s. Labour legislation introduced during World War II required employers to place workers on payrolls and to record the wages paid to each individual. This, in effect, rendered the contract system obsolete. A former contractor working for B.C. Packers in Prince Rupert described how he recruited workers:

My job was a labour contractor—to supply all the labour and be in charge of cannery production. Got paid by the case. No, you didn't have to be Chinese to work for the contractor. My father hired Indians too. (Skogan 1983: 76)

When employers lost the ability to negotiate a price for all labour before the start of the season, Chinese male workers disappeared from the industry (Muszynski 1996). However, by that time, years of discrimination from head taxes and the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act had reduced the supply of available Chinese labour. Those who remained were older workers who, over the decades, had become skilled labourers—that is, they no longer provided a large pool of cheap wage labour.

Japanese and Chinese women had been the initial recruits amongst immigrant women settling in the province, but throughout the twentieth century, successive waves of women from other countries worked in the plants. The position of women and Chinese workers within the UFAWU was problematic. The original organizing drives targeted only the relatively well-paid, top white male workers in the plants, many of whom also fished

commercially (Muszynski 1987). These workers formed a fraction of the overall labour force. When women and Chinese men showed up during the first union drives, demanding to be signed up as members, they were turned away. However, by the 1950s, women like Verna Parkins and Mickey Beagle began to fill important positions in the UFAWU (Muszynski 1996). Beagle, in particular, fought hard for the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, but it took several decades before the “pink” and “blue” lists were amalgamated into the same pay scales for men and women. In the decades after the founding of the UFAWU, British Columbia shoreworkers (plant workers) were among the highest paid fish workers in the world.

The UFAWU had an uneasy relationship with the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia (NBBC), which was formed in 1931. By the 1950s, the NBBC represented approximately 2,000 members, a third of whom were also members of the UFAWU (Clement 1986). While the Native Brotherhood had a significant membership among fishers, it represented fewer shoreworkers, who generally turned to the UFAWU to improve their wages and conditions of work. In 1943, the Native Brotherhood signed with five companies for plants that employed Aboriginal labourers. But when the UFAWU began to negotiate on behalf of all cannery employees, the Native Brotherhood tended to adopt the same agreements for its membership, and the UFAWU agreed that Aboriginal labourers could be members of both organizations (Drucker 1958).

In 1970, the UFAWU undertook an unsuccessful campaign on the east coast of Canada to establish a national union to match the corporations (including B.C. Packers) that were investing in harvesting and processing on both coasts (Clement 1986). In 1962, B.C. Packers had been bought out by George Weston, Ltd., a national and international food wholesale-retail conglomerate that controlled the Canadian grocery store giant Loblaws (Davies 1987). B.C. Packers had subsequently expanded its groundfish operations to Atlantic Canada (Muszynski 1996).

Class, Ethnicity and Gender in the Late Twentieth Century Fisheries

By the close of the twentieth century, salmon canning on the Fraser River had come to an end. The B.C. Packers property around Vancouver became expensive waterfront real estate, turned into luxury residential development. The Steveston waterfront and cannery were developed as historical and tourist attractions. The return of Hong Kong to China helped fuel immigration to British Columbia, and Richmond (including Steveston) became an enclave for Asian migrants. Unlike their predecessors, however, they brought considerable financial wealth as part of the “business class” of immigrants.

First Nations have remained caught in a web of neo-colonial relations that Carstens (1991) describes as “little colonies” within Canada. The yoke

of the colonial past was not cast off, but rather re-shaped, and indigenous people today are struggling against the continuing advances of capitalism while developing a global network of alliances and coalitions. They continue to fight for recognition of their claims to the land and resources.

While salmon cannery work has been reduced to one job among many others in fish processing, and ocean ranching has emerged to compete with wild salmon stocks, the fisheries continue to play a major role in First Nations' struggles with various levels of government for land claims and self-government. The fisheries have been a contentious issue over the last decade on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. First Nations representatives have always insisted that the fisheries are a vital food source and that First Nations have a right to unlimited access to them. White fishers have challenged them, viewing these fisheries as direct competition for dwindling stocks. The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans has played a dubious role in mediating disputes. First Nations' management of the resource has entered the discourse of environmentalists, who cite the symbiotic relationship of First Nations to their sources of food prior to European contact and capitalist exploitation of resources for profit. A Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs in the 1990s made many recommendations, but few of these have been implemented. First Nations representatives sat on the Commission and played a key role, but they were once again ignored in the end.

Research on the proceedings of the Commission and the writing of the report, applying discourse analysis from post-colonial theory, would shed light on the simultaneous inclusion and "othering" of First Nations representatives. In Canada, Royal Commissions are established when struggles surface that need to be addressed—for example, the nineteenth century Royal Commissions on Chinese and Japanese immigration (Canada 1885 and 1902). Much time, money and effort is expended on them, but the recommendations, especially those that call for fundamental changes as articulated by the "subaltern" (Spivak 1999), are rarely implemented. By the term "subaltern," Spivak redefines oppression as constructed and contested through discourse:

The question is not of female participation in insurgency, or the ground rules of the sexual division of labor, for both of which there is "evidence." It is, rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow. (Spivak 1995: 28)

Historically, the employment of labour in the fishing industry was

gendered and racialized in complex ways that were connected to the ability of each group to survive and reproduce itself in Canada and abroad. Today, the fishing industry does not play the crucial role it once did in the lives of Chinese and Japanese residents. The industry has been decimated by capitalist over-exploitation of fish stocks. The companies now engaged in the industry are transnationals that roam the world in search of new areas, and new labour forces, to exploit. Women have proven to be a particularly important global resource as cheap wage labour in fish processing plants. A focus on the historical processes of globalization in the fisheries, both locally and worldwide, in the creation and recruitment of cheap wage labour, provides a point of connection and solidarity for women involved in these fisheries.

Like many other coastal regions around the world, British Columbia continues to feel the impact of transnational corporations which exercise control over its fisheries, but for whom fisheries products represent a small segment of their global holdings. These corporations now control the fisheries of many countries through vertical linkages in food production, marketing and retailing. For example, B.C. Packers promoted its Cloverleaf label to the point where it became a brand name well known across Canada, but today, the corporation owns processing plants in places that used to compete with British Columbia's fisheries. What began as a process of vertical integration has now moved to horizontal and global integration that reduces regional fisheries to a small role in the overall operations of the parent corporations and that eliminates competition through the acquisition of plants around the world. The consequences are the exhaustion of profitable resources and the decline of local communities when plants are closed due to falling profits or resource failures.

Conclusion

There are important continuities between the past and present in the British Columbia salmon canning industry. Industrial development in the salmon fishery was part of the emergence of British Columbia as a patriarchal white settler society. Global developments were central to the successful prosecution of a fishing industry selling into an international marketplace, and Canada's place in the British Commonwealth secured it a preferential position over its American competition in the European portion of that marketplace. Labour migrations to British Columbia took place within the context of an international labour flow associated with ruptures in the lives of Chinese, Japanese and First Nations people that were linked to the development of capitalism, imperialism and the quest for cheap wage labour. More ruptures in the lives of workers, their families and communities occurred as the industry underwent restructuring and eventually disappeared.

In a review of Manuel Castells' *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Waterman (1999) summarized Castells' analysis of the destructive,

dispersing, heterogenizing and individualizing impact on labour of globalized and networked capitalism. He argues that while there is no such thing as a global labour force, in the sense that there is globally mobile capital, there is increasing interdependence between local and localized labour forces. This interdependence is a result of global employment in multinational corporations and their cross-border networks, the impacts of international trade on work in both the North and the South and the local effects of global competition and flexible management (Waterman 1999).

Work and labour are not disappearing; rather, labour's relationship with capital is being transformed. Labour is localized (in Waterman's sense), disaggregated in its performance, fragmented in its organization, diversified in its existence and divided in its collective activity. These labour dynamics are occurring in global networks, often shifting from the advanced capitalist countries to the direct sources of cheap wage labour in developing economies. Indigenous populations in developing countries face similar predicaments across the globe, leading to international coalitions. The sources of their struggles are historically located not only in the acquisition of colonies and the politics of imperialism, but also in the search for profit. In the post-colonial era, the dynamics of capitalism have shifted to transnational corporations, but the nature of the exploitation of labour power, its implications for indigenous peoples and its racialized and gendered discourses demonstrate historical continuity with the past.

Race, gender and class relations were central to the dynamics of the British Columbia salmon canning industry from the beginning. Post-colonial theorists (McClintock 1995; Mukherjee 1998; Spivak 1995 and 1999) have added race to the post-modern feminist (e.g., Butler 1990) deconstruction of gender. Race and gender involve discourses that essentialize the "other" by attributing to these multiple "others" biological characteristics that render them inferior to the socially, politically, economically and culturally constructed "self" (Miles 1989). English language usage refers repeatedly to the racialized and gendered nature of people, especially those who are imagined as "other." Lumping people into categories like "Chinese" or "Indian" also enables thinking about them in mechanical ways; for example, as a source of labour cheaper than that afforded by white men who are identified by name as individuals. For example, before the UFAWU was formed, white men's names appeared on the cannery payroll sheets, while those under contract were not personally identified. Employers simply paid the contractor an agreed-upon sum for the work of the non-white labour force. If we pay attention to the material conditions of people undergoing historical ruptures that force them into new relations of production, we can begin to see that the dichotomies between "East" and "West" form part of the hegemonic discourse of constructing the "other." Thus, the "chinaman" was constructed as an identity familiar to the Western "whiteman" through the political (military) and economic forces of Western imperialism.

This chapter attempts to show that we cannot speak for the “subaltern” or construct them as a category without falling into the problematic pattern identified by post-colonial theorists. History is not an objective record of events, but is itself a contested terrain. The historical record has been opened to include the struggles of the dispossessed and to hear their voices, not just as participants, but also as active historical agents who shape how we come to understand history. They can help us understand how they struggled through the series of rupturing events brought about by colonialism, imperialism and capitalism. A central question, however, is whether or not post-colonial theories can contribute to strategies that can unite women and their communities around the world to oppose transnational corporate control over an ever-increasing range of fisheries.

Fish processing workers are subject to international forces of competition that seek the cheapest labour and the most profitable plants. Fish plants are also implicated in these forces of competition. They must be able to show a profit in a local environment, but they are also frequently dependent on international migration of capital and investment. While women in fish processing around the world have different connections to their communities and to one another, their work is an important link to be developed in resisting capitalist exploitation. Understanding the processes capitalists use to create their labour forces, both historically and today, is important for developing strategies of resistance. The work that women do in the fisheries creates a link that transcends localities and personal histories. One condition for organizing resistance is to respect differences while uniting around the commonalities of exploitation. Post-colonial theories can help us understand some of the processes, but they are not sufficient. More interdisciplinary and international research on women’s labour and how it is both articulated and devalued within global capitalism would be useful in advancing the struggle.

Cleaned Out¹

Donna Lewis

Prince Edward Island has earned an international reputation for excellence on the world shellfish market. One species that has achieved this recognition is the Malpeque oyster.

The physical labour associated with fishing oysters is intensive. “Tongs,” which are basically two rakes, 6–14 feet in length and fastened together, are used to grapple the oysters from the ocean floor and lift them to the boat for cleaning and sorting. Every oyster must be free of spat (oyster seed), barnacles and mussels, and must be at least three inches long to be sold. This activity takes place on public fishing grounds from 1 May to 15 July and from 15 September to 1 December (weather permitting), providing a small window of opportunity for oyster fishers to make a living.

For the most part, women, often the spouses of the oyster fishers, have done the task of cleaning and sorting. To do this, they must possess a commercial fishing registration card, which costs Can\$50. The fisher who owns the boat and gear either pays them a nominal fee, or, by special agreement, gives them a share of the catch. The latter is more lucrative, and not many women are paid that way.

The practice of employing a “cleaner” has been widely accepted in the past, even though DFO [Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada] acknowledges that under Licensing and Registration Regulations 4.1, “no person shall fish for or catch and retain fish ... without ... a licence.”

Several years ago, the federal government saw fit to reclassify and divide fishers into two groups: “core” licences are given for species that could bring in higher incomes, such as lobster, crab and scallop, and “non-core” licenses are for species with a lower income potential, such as oyster, clam, quahog, eel, etc. The price of a “core” licence package has risen to over Can\$400,000 in recent months. This has made it difficult for those making marginal incomes to enter the more prosperous fisheries. Few “core” licence holders are women.

To qualify as a core fisher, several criteria have to be met, including: being head of a fishing enterprise; holding a licence for a main species (lobster, crab, shrimp); being part of the fishery for a long time; and earning one’s main income (more than 75 percent) from the fishery.

The P.E.I. Shellfish Association, an organization representing Island shellfishers, had never pressed for the enforcement of Regulation 4.1 until this past April 2000. At that time, a public meeting was called and, with approximately 200 fishers in attendance (out of a possible 2,000 licence

holders), a vote was held on the issue of banning “cleaners” from the boats unless they held an oyster licence. Only oyster licence holders were permitted to vote. Those who only had commercial registrations, even though they were members of the Association, were excluded.

Jimmy A’Hearn, vice-president of the Association, fishes in one of the more popular spring grounds in Wilmot, P.E.I. According to him, the number of cleaners appears to have dropped by 60 percent since the vote took place. He also claimed that conservation was the incentive for pressing the enforcement of the existing legislation.

The dilemma facing all of the women who have been displaced from the position of cleaners is that, in 1987, a moratorium was placed on new oyster licences. Speculation over the past couple of years has driven the price for a licence up to approximately Can\$10,000. To further complicate the situation, the DFO has started buying back licences in response to the Marshall Decision. In this decision, the Supreme Court of Canada has acknowledged Aboriginal treaty rights to earn a moderate livelihood within the existing fisheries. The DFO’s intent has been to buy “core” packages that would also include oyster, clam, etc. However, in recent weeks, a third party has purchased sixteen individual oyster licences at an undisclosed price. This practice has increased the price of all licences, pushing the prospect of a cleaner being able to afford a licence even farther out of reach.

The media’s response to women being forced out of their traditional occupation was to print excerpts from a press release issued by the federal government stating, “The taking of cleaners in the boats allows licence holders to increase landings significantly, as the time-consuming job of sorting and cleaning is performed by cleaners. While this practice was not considered a major issue for the oyster industry in the past, the P.E.I. Shellfish Association has asked the DFO to increase enforcement of these regulations, authorizing only licenced fishers in the fishery operation.”

In my opinion, one decision made by mankind in the name of conservation has dealt a fateful blow to those women continuing the struggle to survive and maintain access to fish resources in Island coastal communities.

Note

1. This chapter was originally published in *Yemaya*, Special Issue, August 2000, a newsletter from the ICSF.

Gender, Globalization and a Tragic Choice on Fogo Island, Newfoundland

The Human Rights Case¹

Bonnie McCay

Ever since Europeans discovered Fogo Island on the northeast coast of Newfoundland² some time in the fifteenth century, the Island and its people have been closely tied to distant places through the commercial fisheries. As was the case for fishing communities elsewhere in northeastern Newfoundland, Fogo Island's major commodity was salted cod (*Gadus morhua*), supplemented by salmon and seals. Any money received for these products was due to their value in very distant places such as Italy, Greece and, for the poorer quality of saltfish ("West Indies cull"), the plantation slave economies of the New World. The people doing the fishing and processing came from England and Ireland, and those who organized the fishery and marketed the fish were initially located in England. By the latter part of the nineteenth century, the merchants who controlled this trade had established themselves in Newfoundland itself, although their cultural ties remained abroad. Gender manifested itself within the household mode of production, whereby women were committed to the major responsibility for "making" the saltfish (converting it to the desired salted and dried product).

The market for the fish and shellfish processed by Fogo Islanders has changed greatly. Saltfish is much less valuable, despite the very high quality of Fogo Island's saltfish in specialized markets. Frozen fish, often in "block" form (filleted but with no further processing), became the major commodity from the 1950s to the 1980s. With the decline in groundfish stocks that led to the closure of Newfoundland's cod fishery in 1992, there was a reorientation to other products and markets, particularly offshore crab and, since the late 1990s, shrimp, geared to markets in Japan and the U.S.

Women have been central to fish commodity production all along, but with the advent of centralized processing plants that replaced the household-based saltfish production system, they became official members of the working class rather than unpaid household workers. Work is strongly gendered. Men go to sea to catch fish and shellfish, but only a few women fish. Women and men work in the fish and shellfish plants on the Island, but women have certain jobs there and men have others. Globalization is not new, but the trade, capital flows and technological advances and transfers associated with it have been more intensive and extensive since the 1970s

than they were in earlier periods. For example, Japan is now a major market for Fogo Island's fish products, and companies from the U.S., Japan and Iceland play a strong role in determining how the local cooperative operates and manages its plants.

Globalization's impacts on women are multiple and contradictory (Moghadam 1999). Economic globalization may benefit many women by creating jobs for them, often, as in the Fogo Island case, in export processing. The ramifications are many, including the support this provides for women to "break away from the hold of patriarchal structures, including traditional household and familial relations" (Moghadam 1999: 367). The contradictory part is that women often find themselves in badly paid, demeaning or insecure jobs, which contributes to the "feminization of poverty."

In the case of Fogo Island, patriarchal structures of the past were replicated in the actions of the Island's fisheries cooperative as it struggled to deal with competition for the trade of its fishers. The fish processing jobs that were threatened by these actions are difficult but were not seen as demeaning, insecure or poorly paid. However, the locally available alternatives, particularly "home care" for invalids and the elderly, are clearly examples of feminized poverty. Much was at stake, and the women affected by the cooperative's actions fought back with the help of a government human rights commission.

Women and Human Rights on Fogo Island

In July 1999, a large group of women met at a local motel to talk with a representative of the Human Rights Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador. In May of that year, when the fishing season began, these women, long-term workers and members of the cooperative, were disappointed at not being "called into work" at its fish and crab plants. The reason given for their plight was a new policy at the cooperative, in which hiring was to be based not just on ability and seniority but also "with preference given to family members" of fishers who delivered all their fish, lobster, crab and shrimp to the cooperative rather than to other buyers. The women were hurt and outraged. They took their case to the Human Rights Commission, which agreed to provide legal representation for thirty-three of the women in a case against the Fogo Island Co-operative.

The July meeting led to a formal hearing at the end of March 2000. It took another year for a decision to be reached, and in the meantime, most of the women struggled to make ends meet as minimum-wage home-care workers for elders and sick residents, as babysitters for women lucky enough to have kept their jobs, as members of their husbands' fishing crews or as dependent homemakers trying to get by with no income of their own. In June 2001, the adjudicator in the case, Mary O'Brien, found for the women on the grounds of "marital discrimination." During the fishing season of 2001, the women who lost their jobs had their seniority rights restored and

were offered jobs at the plants. Some accepted; others refused. In the summer of 2002, the women separately negotiated the terms of compensation. In 2004 the final judgement against the Co-operative required that it compensate the women a total of \$400,000 in back wages and fines (CBC 2004).

The conflict was tightly gendered because of the structure of production in fish and shellfish plants in Newfoundland (and most other parts of the world), in which women do most of the detailed processing work and men handle the forklifts, managerial tasks and some of the more highly paid processing tasks such as filleting. The situation that led to this case also reflected the idea that women's work is contingent on their relationships with family and the men in their lives. The dispute led to the articulation of another view: that women's work is to be judged for itself alone.

The conflict also had local roots in an earlier fisheries crisis, that of the 1960s and early 1970s, which led to the creation of the cooperative in 1968. The Fogo Island Co-operative Society now serves six Island communities and about 3,200 people. It has been remarkably successful since 1968 in helping to make it possible for people to continue to live on the Island, dependent as everyone is on the inshore and nearshore fisheries for income and employment. It is one of the few enduring fishery cooperatives in Atlantic Canada.

It is important to note that membership includes fishing vessel owners, crew members and plant workers. Most of the women who lost their jobs because of what their mates did were long-standing members and thus owners of the cooperative, fuelling their sense of injustice. Just as the major fisheries union in Newfoundland and Labrador has somehow managed to represent the seemingly contradictory interests of fish plant workers and independent, self-employed fishers as members, so the members of the Fogo Island Co-operative include both fish plant workers and fishers.³ The ideology—and reality—that helped keep this institution together and contributed to the Island's survival is: "We are all in the same boat." However, as on any large boat going through turbulent waters, there is often trouble on board.

The conflict reflected globalization insofar as it was partly the result of intensified pressure on localized fish production and processing systems to compete in world markets and the movements of capital and stresses on labour entailed in this competition. As will be shown, the cooperative was caught "between a rock and a hard place" as it tried to balance its mission to support its members and, by extension, Fogo Islanders, with its need to cater to the demands of buyers of its crab and other products in order to compete. The conflict also clearly shows the globalization of notions of human rights and gender equality.

The Larger Situation: “Between a Rock and a Hard Place”

The long-standing dilemma is that the cooperative depends on the raw product of fishers, and the fishers thus claim some right to ask that their own family members get special consideration at the fish and crab plants. On the other hand, workers claim the right to be judged and rewarded on the basis of their commitment and experience (i.e., seniority) and their skills, no matter who they live with and are related to. Complaints about hiring for non-merit reasons—the so-called “fishermen’s wives” preference—have a long history (McCay 1988).

In order to understand the dilemma, one must look at the context. In the face of declining northern cod stocks in the late 1980s, emphasis shifted to other fisheries, particularly snow crab and northern shrimp. The crab fishery began in the 1980s, and by the 1990s, it was the major source of revenue on Fogo Island, supporting hundreds of households through jobs on longliners equipped with crab pots and up to three hundred jobs in the crab processing plant, which produced whole crab, crab pieces and crab meat for U.S. and Japanese markets (McCay 1999). By the 1990s, the crab fleet was expanding its fishing grounds far offshore, to the edge of Canada’s 200-mile limit, as the federal government fisheries department opened more and more areas for crab fishing.

An important factor in the Fogo Island case is the intense competition among Newfoundland’s crab plants for the raw product. The crab fishery had become the basis of Newfoundland’s fish processing economy by the mid-1990s, and shrimp increasingly so in the late 1990s. Competition for raw product was intensified by the fact that the federal government tightly controls the landings, whereas licences for processing plants, controlled by the provincial government, were granted more liberally, resulting in overcapacity (Warren 2002). The Fogo Island Co-op had to compete with other buyers for the fish and crabs caught by Island fishers.

By the latter part of the 1990s, some Islanders had defected from the cooperative for various reasons. Added to its difficulty in retaining the raw product caught by Fogo Islanders was the issue of financing the fishery. Engaging in the crab fishery productively and safely came to depend on having very large, expensive, fully equipped fishing vessels. Steel-hulled and even wooden fibreglassed vessels cost well over a million dollars to build, much less to outfit with navigation, depth sounding, safety and other equipment. “Full-time” licences for the crab fisheries, which are strictly limited in number, are worth several hundred thousand dollars. Recalling the financial disaster of financing longliners in the 1970s, the Fogo Island Co-op decided not to finance these investments. In 1999, Fogo Islanders also gained licences to take part in shrimp dragging, adding to the need for financing.⁴ Off-Island crab and shrimp buyers financed some of the Fogo Island vessels and offered many other inducements for their custom, such as paying weekly rather than every two weeks for product delivered.

Another factor in the situation was the Co-op's construction of a new crab plant in the town of Fogo, in order to modernize their facilities to be more competitive in the market. There was little choice, in this globalized world: Japanese and U.S. buyers and middlemen drive the market. The new crab plant used fewer workers than before (about half); thus, about 150 people lost access to crab plant work.

What brought the Fogo Island Cooperative's situation to a head was that in 1999, a large number of Fogo Island longliners began to ship their catches elsewhere, in many cases because they needed financing in order to do well in the new crab and shrimp fisheries. It was a struggle to keep the crab plant operating (the shrimp plant had not yet opened), and the cooperative's financial health was suffering. It was allegedly on the brink of bankruptcy. In addition, there were fewer jobs at the new crab plant. The plant's problems threatened the ability of hundreds of households on the Island to bring in wages and unemployment insurance from seasonal processing work.

What to do? Options were limited. Standard producers' cooperative policy prohibits any requirement that members sell only to the cooperative. The Co-op's board of directors—made up of longliner skippers, plant workers and secretarial staff—devised an alternative: a requirement that fishers promise to deliver their fish or crustaceans to the cooperative to enable close family members to continue working at its plants. "Closeness" quickly became narrowed down to fishers' spouses or other partners. The issue then became: "What about the other women workers?" It posed a major dilemma, that of how to respect the rights of classes of people—in this case, workers (more particularly, women workers)—when the particular and immediate concerns of the cooperative's communities and the business institutions involved might seem to call for abrogating these rights. The situation was one of "tragic choice" (Calabresi and Bobbitt 1978), where no one really wins.

When the 1999 processing season began on the sixth of May, most people were called in to work as they had expected, based on their experience. However, many women were not. Evidence from the Human Rights Commission hearing reveals the complexion, and the complexity, of the tragic choice made by the cooperative and the consequences for its workers.⁵ Two kinds of stories were told in the testimonies. One was from the women who lost their opportunities to work, stories about the loss of income and identity, and about betrayal. The other is from representatives of the cooperative, stories about the need to make difficult choices at a time of crisis in order to save the economic mainstay of the Island.

The Human Rights Commission Hearing

Four crab plant workers were selected to represent the typical situations of the thirty-three women who joined in the case brought before the Human

Rights Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador. Most of the women had long been cooperative members in good standing. The complaint used by their attorney was that they were discriminated against on the basis of marital status when they were denied employment because their spouses refused to sign, or violated, agreements to market their catch exclusively with the Fogo Island Co-operative.⁶ The Human Rights Code of Newfoundland and Labrador does not allow discrimination on the basis of marital status (nor of race, religious creed, disability, national or social origin, ethnicity, colour or age), but it does allow for the possibility that work may be assigned or withdrawn due to “a limitation, specification or preference based on a good faith occupational qualification” (Newfoundland 1990).

Day One: The case for the plant workers

The first witness to take the stand had been a member and employee of the Fogo Island Co-op since 1969—for thirty years, or virtually its entire history. She represented the many who lost work because their spouses had not (yet) signed an agreement to ship their fish and lobsters exclusively to the Co-op:

[She] stated for the court that in losing her position, “it was as if someone belonging to me had died. It couldn’t have hurt any worst. To be employed for so many years in the same industry and to be let go because my husband didn’t ship his lobster to the Co-op hit me hard.... I looked forward to every spring when the plant would be up and running, but last year when the plant opened and work started, I didn’t get a call while the rest of my shift went in to work. It was odd because I was on top of the seniority list and under normal circumstances would have been among the very first.” Her husband eventually agreed to ship his lobsters to the Co-op. Like four of her colleagues, she found herself back at work within a day or two because of her spouse’s action. However, neither she nor the others withdrew their complaints. Another woman with the same story said that she too felt pressured into having her husband sign the agreement. When asked by her lawyer how it made her feel, her response was, “I felt like a nobody. I wasn’t a person.” (Penton 2000)

The next two witnesses represented the many whose spouses worked on fishing vessels and had little say in whether or not the captain or owner delivered fish or crabs to the Co-op or to firms off the Island. Crew members have no authority to dictate where the catch is sold. The first woman, an employee of almost twenty years, testified that her husband was a crew member on his brother’s boat, which no longer shipped fish and crab to the

Co-op. She pointed out that as a crew member, he had “no control over where the catch is sold” (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 6). She added that the plant manager had acknowledged that “he felt as though he was caught between a rock and a hard place” (Penton 2000). In any case, she was forced to look for other work and, like many others, found nothing besides the minimum wage job of home-care worker, which meant a substantial decrease in income for herself and her family.

The second crew member’s wife to testify was also a long-time member and employee. She was not called in for work because her husband was thought to be fishing as a crew member on a vessel not shipping to the Co-op. In fact, he had not yet found a fishing position and was waiting to start work at the crab plant himself. However, he did find a better paying job on a boat about six days later, a boat that did not ship to the Co-op, and she was forced to take a job as home-care worker. Like the other women, she was deeply hurt by the experience. She also implied that an implicit contract had been broken when she said in court, “I couldn’t believe after twenty years, they did this to me. I [had] never refused one day’s work” (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 8).

The final witness to be called on behalf of the employees held a position as a “forelady,” or supervisor. Her husband was not a crew member but was part owner of a fishing vessel that did not ship to the Co-op. Although unique, her situation was particularly telling of the dilemma faced by workers, fishers and others on Fogo Island. The important contextual fact was that her husband had to go to a private fish processing company to obtain financing for his new vessel because the Co-op was unable to help him. “In return for financing, he agreed to sell all his catch to the private company. Prior to this, he had been a 100% supporter of the Co-op” (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 11). This woman had been a member and employee of the Co-op since 1982, starting as a production worker and becoming a supervisor in 1988. As a supervisor, she was part of the process of implementing the new preferential hiring policy. Needless to say, she was shocked when she found that she, too, was dropped. Her testimony, like the others, showed the nature and depth of the personal loss. The Co-op’s plants are more than just places to work for many of the workers—who are also owners, as members of the cooperative. Ironically, they are another community. This woman called the Co-op her “second family”:

When asked in court how the refusal of employment made her feel, she said:

I was shocked and mad. I was the last person to file a [human rights] complaint because I thought someone would wake up.... I was devastated that my second family was penalizing me for what my husband had done. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 11)

In another account of how surprised and upset she was in finding out that she, too, had lost her job despite seniority, she is quoted as saying:

I was shocked at losing my job because of something my husband had done that I had no control over. The Plant had become my second home, my second family, and that in the year 2000, this should not be happening. (Penton 2000)

Day Two: Witnesses from the Fogo Island Co-operative, the respondent

The tragic choice was between the rights of the workers to be “called in” based on their experience, skills and histories with the cooperative, and finding a way to address the cooperative’s economic problems so that it could continue to provide income to the majority of households in the Island’s nine communities. If it ceased to exist, there would be no jobs at all. On the second day of the Human Rights Commission investigation, representatives of the Fogo Island Co-op testified. In their stories, they emphasized the Co-op’s history, its position in a competitive and changing economy and how the management—including plant worker and fisher board members—had sought to save the operations and rationalize hiring policy. They highlighted the history and scope of the problems besetting the Co-op, including the fact that whereas in 1998, ten to fifteen fishers were selling off the Island, by 2000, the number was close to twenty. But many of the family members, mainly spouses, of people on those boats were continuing to work at the fish and crab plants, raising some “discontent” among fishers who had remained loyal to the Co-op. There followed the meetings, votes and decisions that led to the lay-offs of many long-standing employee-members.

In their testimony, Co-op representatives reported that 68 percent of the members who attended a general meeting voted to approve the new policy stating that not just seniority but also whether one’s spouse or other close family member shipped fish to the Co-op would matter in hiring. The vote was not enough to change the constitution, but the board of directors interpreted it as a mandate. It seemed to fit the concerns heard in a series of community meetings held earlier, in 1997, about how poorly the rule of “seniority” was used in hiring, as well as a long-standing concern about the need for a clear and acceptable hiring policy.

On cross-examination, a board member—unusual for being a plant worker rather than a fishing vessel owner—reiterated that the survival of Fogo Island was the operative factor. Acknowledging that the board’s policy hurt thirty-three member employees, he referred to the necessary utilitarian trade-off:

All things aren’t fair. When it comes down to access to product to employ 300 people—that’s where the decision came from—it came

down to the greater good. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 17)

There were three more witnesses for the Fogo Island Co-op: two members of the board of directors—longliner owners and skippers—and the general manager. The first was a skipper who had quit as director and president of the board in June 1999, soon after the issue emerged, because his own family members were embroiled in the situation. He made the point that hiring problems had worsened in the mid- to late 1990s, as people lost access to government compensation programs established with the closure of the northern cod fishery and fish plants. It was exacerbated in 1999 by the opening of the automated crab plant, which drastically reduced the processing workforce:

In explaining the crux of the issue, [he] stated: “It seemed hiring was done on the basis of who you knew, (whether you were) related to certain people, and how much fuss you wanted to make to get work.” In addition, there was increasing pressure from fishers who were full supporting members and wanted to ensure employment for their family members. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 17)

His own fishing enterprise was a telling example, and his story highlighted the problem from the perspective of a vessel owner (co-owner with brothers) with “immediate family” jobs at the fish plant:

[He] said the same discussion occurred in his own family business in the three to four years preceding the adoption of the preferential hiring policy. [He] along with his five brothers have an incorporated fishing company which owns/operate [sic] a 45 ft. fishing boat. In 1999, the business supplied the Co-op with 175,000 lbs. of crab, 100,000 lbs. of turbot, and 700,000 lbs. of herring. Their 1998 landings were slightly less. Although, at times, [he] could have gotten a higher price for his product elsewhere, he always sold to the Co-op because his wife and his brothers’ wives worked there. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 18)

The concept of “full supporting member” arose in this discussion. In context, it appeared to refer to only one kind of cooperative member, the vessel owner, even though fish plant workers are also members. Specifically, it referred to vessel owner-operators who consistently delivered their catches to the Co-op rather than elsewhere. The president of the board stated that it had been a struggle to implement the preferential hiring policy, but he defended it at the hearing:

(We) looked at what we felt was right for the business [the cooperative]. It took a long time to put something together that the board felt would be beneficial to the full supporting members.... The intent wasn't to leave anyone out. The intent was to ensure that full supporting members were treated fairly. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 19)

The stakes were high, because many vessel owners, including himself and his brothers, felt that if something were not done to improve hiring policy, they would start shipping to other buyers.

Asked what action, if any, his company would have taken if the preferential hiring policy hadn't been introduced, [he] stated: "We and other boats may have decided to leave (the) Co-op and sell elsewhere.... We strongly considered this option." (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 18)

Under cross-examination, he clarified what was seen as fair treatment for the vessel owners:

As a full supporting member selling 100% of my catch to the Co-op, as a benefit for being a full supporting member, I expect a reasonable amount of work for some of my family.... As a full supporting member, I expect more from the Co-op than someone selling elsewhere. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 19)

As he said earlier in his testimony:

It boils down to whether I'm willing to take less for my product and have my wife working and keep this business on Fogo Island, or, make a few extra dollars [by shipping elsewhere] and have my wife at home. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 18)

Another vessel owner admitted that although crew members had no say in where the vessel shipped its catch, the situation was bad enough to justify including them in the policy: "None of this is easy. There is going to be some people get hurt" (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 22). His fishing enterprise, co-owned with his father and brother and employing sixteen people, was the largest supplier of raw material to the Co-op. They were long-time loyal members and leaders of the Co-op, and they were at the point of leaving if changes were not made:

The way it was going, the feeling I got from other fishermen, they weren't willing to take it anymore. The thing was going to fall apart.

Why would I want to stay with something so unstable. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 22)

Day Two ended with testimony from the general manager, who repeated the account of the cooperative's near bankruptcy and how the matter of family members' jobs related to it:

He said: "It seemed that non-supporting members and partial supporting members were hogging employment opportunities and full supporting members were not getting employment for their families." The board identified this as an issue that had to be dealt with swiftly because it potentially jeopardized the supply of raw material. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 23)

He added that competition for jobs had increased in 1999, when the new automated crab plant reduced the workforce by 150 people.

Day Three: "The Devil made me do it"

On the third day of the hearing, attorneys representing the Human Rights Commission and the Fogo Island Co-operative Society gave their closing arguments. The case made for the Co-op was that it was a unique institution, critical to the survival of Fogo Island's communities, and that it was in a difficult situation that justified taking exceptional measures:

It is a unique industry that has been owned and operated by its members. We heard in ... testimony that the Co-op has a social conscience, and that the Co-op has delivered a service that no other entity could have filled back then. The fish plants would not have survived without the establishment of the Co-op. Thirteen million dollars was paid out to its employees last year, and it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out the Co-op's contribution to the Island.⁷

The more technical argument was that the nature of a workers' cooperative allows for preferential hiring policies that benefit members and their families, and that the policy under review was a "*bona fide* occupational qualification" as per the Human Rights Code. Moreover, the attorney argued, the policy stated that preference was to be given to "immediate family," not to spouses, and thus no marital status discrimination was involved. In addition, no one was excluded from working; they were just moved down the employment list, and there was no evidence that immediate family members of those who shipped all their fish and crab to the Co-op got work to the detriment of the women who filed the complaint (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 31).

The Human Rights Commission attorney's argument was that the women workers were discriminated against when they were not "called in" because of what their spouses were doing. This amounted to marital discrimination. Moreover, the new "preference policy" had no rational basis for being considered a "*bona fide* occupational qualification," because it had nothing to do with efficient work of the women. The attorney added that the cooperative was not acting in good faith, because the membership voted down a resolution to amend the constitution to reflect this policy, but the board of directors passed it.

The fact is that the ability of these workers had nothing to do with being a family member of a 100 percent supporting fisherman. Essentially, it's a case of the Devil made me do it. They had to secure product to keep the plant operations going. They were responding to a threat by fishermen and they wanted to ensure employment for their families.⁸

The decision: "The plant workers' jobs were used as ransom...."

In June 2001, the adjudicator made public her decision on behalf of the Board of Inquiry, which was in favour of the thirty-three women who complained. There were several legal issues. One was the argument made by the cooperative that the preferential policy was adopted to avert a crisis, brought on in part by the absence of a hiring policy and the general disarray in hiring practices, which was damaging morale and eroding confidence, contributing to dissatisfaction and loss of supporters to other fish and crab buyers. The adjudicator disagreed with this argument:

The preferential hiring policy in my view could only fan the flames of discontent. It need hardly be said that a policy adversely affecting the employment of 33 women who had enjoyed an average of 14.6 years of seniority was only likely to exacerbate the discontent. If the respondents' primary concern was to address complaints from the workers regarding hiring, they would have followed the personnel policy—not established a preferential hiring policy in contravention of it.... The Board of Inquiry finds that the dissatisfaction with respect to hiring was directly due to the respondents' own failure to follow seniority [i.e., there was a hiring policy, but it was not followed].... The respondents are certainly not entitled to rely on the membership's dissatisfaction as justification for a hiring policy which, on its face would only add to the discontent. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 37)

Indeed, the argument that the policy was created to reduce workers' dissatisfaction was judged to be misleading:

the primary motivation for the preferential hiring policy was not to

address the concerns of plant worker members (which had gone unanswered for years), but rather to respond to pressure from some full supporting fishers that they would sell elsewhere unless given special privilege, i.e., priority in hiring to their immediate family members. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 37)

Instead, the workers' jobs were used as ransom:

To secure the loyalty of fishers, plant workers married to fishers were moved down the line (that is, to the bottom of the employment list), unless they could bring their husband in line. Put another way, plant workers' jobs were used as ransom to secure their husbands' catch. That fishers were drifting away, or threatening to drift away, from the Co-op unless given priority in hiring to their family members, cannot be used as justification for abrogating the rights of the plant workers. (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 38)

Finally, there was no good evidence that this preferential hiring policy could make a difference to the plight of the Fogo Co-op in its competition with other buyers for the trade of Fogo Island's fishing vessels:

In any case, the evidence established that fishers have been leaving the Co-op for various reasons including dissatisfaction with grading and, in particular, dissatisfaction with price. There was no cogent evidence that a preferential hiring policy could stem the tide. How, for example, could a plant worker bring her spouse's fish to the table if her husband was a shareman with no influence over the skipper? (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 38)

That ended the Co-op's possible defence of "*bona fide* occupational qualification."

There were other important findings. First, although the preference in the hiring policy for "immediate family members" was broader than marital status, it clearly included marital status. Second, the policy was exclusionary, giving preferential treatment for one group as against another, and "being moved to the bottom of the list was tantamount to being removed from the list" (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 32). Third, the argument about the unique feature of a workers' cooperative did not hold, because this cooperative's own personnel policy gave preference to members, not members' families, and because co-operatives are not supposed to favour certain members at the expense of others: "Quite the contrary. It is in the common interest to manage the affairs of a Co-op in a manner which does not favour the particular interests of one member over another" (Newfoundland and Labrador-HRC 2001: 33).

In June 2001, the Human Rights Commission found in the favour of the thirty-three former employees of the Fogo Island Co-operative, ordering that they be compensated for their dismissal and reinstated in their old positions. The Co-op decided not to appeal. The final agreement about compensation, which is not public, was reached during the fall and winter of 2001–02.

Conclusion

Why focus on the plight and response of thirty-three women on Fogo Island? One reason is methodological. As Coombe stated (1995: 809), “The macrostructural approach to global capitalism, although necessary as a point of departure, is but an empty scaffold, incapable of doing justification to the complexities of the lives of those whose energies construct it.” Globalization processes are always experienced and mediated locally (Featherstone et al. 1995; Stone et al. 2000; Watts 1992a). Another reason is that this case demonstrates a manifestation of the complexities of globalization—the spread of concepts of human rights and gender equality, at the same time that political globalization weakens the welfare state (Moghadam 1999: 368).

Having successfully contributed to the survival of Fogo Island’s communities (although with the loss of many out-migrants) during the fisheries crisis of the 1990s, the Fogo Island Co-op found itself in the throes of competition for raw product—with numerous other buyers, with other communities facing unemployment from failed fisheries and with its own fisher-members trying to make the best of the very bad situation of the cod moratorium. The Co-op diversified, and its crab fishery and crab plant helped families survive the loss of groundfish. However, the crab fishery’s season gets shorter by the year, reducing the chances that plant workers will qualify for unemployment benefits during the long winter off-season. Forced to compete on a global market, the Co-op invested in a new, more efficient crab plant—with a greatly reduced workforce. As competition for jobs at the plants has increased, so has the need for clear rules about hiring and firing.

Meanwhile, competition for the crab caught by Fogo Island’s large longliner vessels, and the Co-op’s inability to offer them financing to upgrade their vessels for the crab and shrimp fisheries, combined with other issues, has resulted in the loss of many boats to other buyers. Plant capacity is much higher than the raw product available, and there is less work available. The board of directors hit upon a solution to these problems in its “preferential hiring” policy: it could increase the incentive to deliver fish and crab to Co-op plants by requiring that spouses or boyfriends of plant workers do so. This also was a way to rationalize decisions to “call in” some workers and not others. The board failed to recognize that human rights were at stake—and probably had not even thought that the concept of

human rights had anything to do with Fogo Island, where everyone was trying to survive as best they could, and the Co-op was also doing its best to survive.

Those made to pay the price for the Co-op's survival strategy in an increasingly competitive environment were some of the women workers at the fish and crab plants. As their testimonies indicate, they objected to the social fact that by the Co-op's actions, their very identity, shaped by the intense, seasonal work at the plants, was collapsed into that of their husbands and boyfriends. No matter that they had their own memberships, share capital and work history and were part of a "second family" or community at the plants. It seemed unfair and wrong to imply that if "their men" did not support the Co-op by shipping their lobster, fish or crab to it, then they did not support it either or that their support was of little consequence.

Times have changed; or rather, culture is changing. As one of the women said at the hearing, "In the year 2000, this should not be happening" (Penton 2000). The social fact for Fogo Island's outports, like many other rural coastal communities of Atlantic Canada, is that familial, affinal and gendered social relations have long been extremely important determinants of social and personal identity and of patterns of access to resources, including jobs. However, through the work of the attorneys at the Human Rights Commission and the determination and bravery of the women who agreed to be part of it—against considerable social pressure, enough to worry some of the women about returning to the plants to work (Penton 2001)—a different notion of right has been asserted and supported. The case underscored and helped to legitimate local acceptance of the idea that individuals have rights to be judged on their merits alone. This occurred in the context of an evolving local emphasis on labour relations and the social classes linked to them. In the winter of 2000–01, the fish plant workers of Fogo Island finally voted to join the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union.

Making this something of a "tragedy of the commons" is the fact that the Cooperative is an institution created to buffer the worst side-effects of capitalist development and globalization: the displacement of people due to over-exploitation of natural resources and the movement of capital and labour. The long and costly battle over the rights of women to their jobs did nothing to solve the larger ecological, political and economic problems that threaten the entire local economy and society, and it is doubtful that the unionization of plant workers will solve any of those problems. Indeed, it may further constrain the development of locally appropriate institutions for cooperation and resistance in the context of economic and cultural globalization. As one of the women said at the March 2000 hearing, "There is no winner here. There has been a great injustice done to the members of the Fogo Island Co-op" (Penton 2000). However, through the persistence of the protesting women and their legal representatives at the Human

Rights Commission, the outcome is recognition of the generic rights of people not to experience discrimination due to marital status. This may be interpreted as a step in the direction of full incorporation of rural Newfoundlanders and Labradorians into the culture and structures of a globalized, industrialized society. It is fraught with ambiguity and the potential for unintended consequences, but marked by the fact that women have acted to shape their futures.

Notes

1. Many thanks to the women and men of Fogo Island who have graciously spent time trying to explain what is happening with their lives and institutions, and in particular to Carol Penton and Cheryl Cobb Penton of the *Fogo Island Flyer*, Elizabeth Brett of Barr'd Islands, Rita Penton of Joe Batt's Arm, and to the numerous other women who talked with me after their first meeting with a representative of the Human Rights Commission in July 1999, as well as to Wayne Cull, Cecil Godwin and Bernadette Dwyer of the Fogo Island Co-operative. They bear no responsibility for the arguments and interpretations of this chapter but they are due much gratitude. This chapter relies heavily on Carol Penton and Bonnie McCay "Island Notes: Newfoundland," *Samudra Report, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers*, No. 26: 41-45 (2000). Earlier versions of parts of the chapter also appeared in "Fogo Island Plant Workers," *Yemaya: Newsletter on Gender and the Fisheries, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers*. A version of the chapter is published as "Women's Rights, Community Survival, and the Fisheries Cooperative of Fogo Island," p. 158-76 in Reginald Byron, ed, *Retrenchment and Regeneration in Rural Newfoundland*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003.
2. The island of Newfoundland and the mainland region of Labrador make up the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Until 2002, the province's official name was Newfoundland.
3. The Fogo Island Co-operative was created in 1968 as the Fogo Island Ship-building and Producers' Society. The FFAW (Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union) was established in 1971. It happened that one of the union organizers was brother to a person who was involved in helping the Fogo Island Co-operative reorganize after early financial and management problems. The union organizer agreed to avoid unionizing Fogo Island to help the cooperative survive (Larry Cashin. Personal Communication. 1972).
4. The "full-time" crab licence was created in the 1980s when crab pot fishing was new. "Supplementary" licences were set up in the 1990s, when the longliner fleet dependent on declining groundfish stocks demanded entry into the lucrative crab fishery. Full-time crab licencees generally have a much larger share of the total allowable catch. Thus, supplementary crab licence holders were eager to add shrimp dragging to their year's round, given the limits on crab imposed by their licences.
5. The evidence presented comes mainly from testimony at the March 2000 hearing, as reported in the Island's monthly newsletter, the *Fogo Island Flyer* (Penton 2000), *The Navigator* (Penton 2001) and in the final report of the Board of Inquiry in June 2001 (Human Rights Commission 2001).

6. Another criterion used in deciding on whom to call to work was performance. This was very contentious, because there had been no formal, routine measures of performance. Some women in their fifties, struggling with poor health (including what might be crab asthma), were put lower on the lists ostensibly because of performance. The Human Rights Commission did not take up these performance cases if they were not also cases of alleged marital status discrimination.
7. The lawyers' statements were in the original transcript of the hearing but not in the published report.
8. See note 7.

Section Four

GENDER, GLOBALIZATION AND FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Are Women Martians?¹

Ariella Pablke

I recently attended a Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) consultation in Moncton—about fisheries management in Atlantic Canada. I was there with Mary DesRoches, representing the Nova Scotia Women’s FishNet. Our presentation covered issues in a DFO discussion document that would affect women in coastal communities and women employed in the fishery. After our presentation and many others, a representative of a New Brunswick druggers’ association delivered a heated stream of negative comments. He ended with an outburst of anger that was apparently brought on by our presentation: “And then,” he sputtered, while a woman’s voice in our headphones politely attempted to simultaneously translate his frustration, “And then, there are some people who think that women—women!—should sit at the decision-making table. Well, if this is the case, we might as well invite the Martians to have a seat as well!”

Later in the discussion, we were talking about the economic and social viability of the fishery and how the term “stakeholders” should be defined. Mary and I both said that anyone who is directly or indirectly affected by the fishery, or who has a historical attachment to it, should be involved in policy decisions. We added that this would obviously include women, who are key stakeholders in the sustainability of coastal communities and fishing families and who have always participated in many aspects of the fishery. We were then told by a member of DFO’s Policy Review Committee that he was now aware of our opinions, but that DFO was proposing something different in its discussion document.

At that point, I seriously considered leaving the room to take a quick drive down to the local costume shop for a “Martian” outfit. I would then return to ask the same question, as a Martian representing Martians, and suggesting that Martians are also stakeholders and so should have a say in fisheries policy. After all, I’d tell the meeting, Martians could have a lot to gain if the fishery continues to be privatized and professionalized. In future, when inter-planetary travel becomes easier, Martians might well want to buy some boats and quota, enroll in some training and safety workshops, and

head out to make some money. We might even give the Martians some seed money, if they promised to buy a lot of quota and hire a small percentage of local earthlings for a few months to show them the ropes.

Needless to say, I didn't leave and then return as a Martian. But I do think that within this consultation framework, a Martian might quite rightly have been given the same response Mary and I received: "Thank you for your opinion, but we are not proposing that Martians have a significant role at this point in time." Which leads me to the question: Are women and Martians, in fact, similar? I know that I don't think we are, and I know that most women, and many friends and families of women, don't think we are, but what about the general opinion, the status quo, the majority, the "average Joe"? What about the average politician or bureaucrat?

This question only becomes really interesting when we consider what the answer's consequences are. I suppose that if women are like Martians, we might not need to be treated as humans or be given similar opportunities as men. This could save the government a lot of money. We, as a nation, could certainly save on Employment Insurance, training, salaries, health care and education. We could simply ensure that every woman/Martian got paired off with a husband, and as long as he was well looked after, she/it wouldn't starve, and might even have a nice life. On the other hand, if women are humans, we might want jobs, and we would probably want to make some decisions about what's best for our families, our communities and ourselves. We might even get together and brainstorm about how we could influence policies that were unfair to women and fishing families or that were detrimental to community sustainability. Now and then, you might even see a woman presenting some of these ideas at a policy consultation.

But before I get too far ahead of myself, getting into details about how women in coastal communities are affected by fisheries policies, Employment Insurance regulations or the accessibility of training programs, and before I outline any of the ideas or solutions that women have proposed to build community sustainability and social and economic development, we need to ensure that the framework exists for women to be acknowledged as full and equal participants and decision makers in our communities. What is frightfully depressing is that we don't yet seem to be in agreement about the basic fact that needs to be understood before we can go any further—the fact that women are not like Martians.

Perhaps, if we can all agree to this, we'll start to see the need for some changes. In Nova Scotia's coastal communities today, many women are not given the same opportunities as men. Women's work, both paid and unpaid, must be recognized as contributing to the economic stability of our communities. Women's voices must be considered as relevant and important when we are exploring solutions to the many challenges our communities face.

Because it was at a DFO policy consultation that I was forced to question my identity as a human being, I will end by throwing the resulting questions back out for the consideration of our government representatives: Who are you representing? Are you representing equally both men's and women's concerns? What is guiding you to represent an industry as a closed circuit of "professionals" and corporations rather than as environments, communities and the people really affected by the fisheries? Also, who are you willing to discuss these questions with, and will you consider all the different points of view seriously? I hope we can answer some of these most basic questions soon, so we can start working together to discover solutions to some of the more interesting and meaningful challenges facing our coastal communities.

Note

1. This chapter is excerpted from an article by Ariella Pahlke, working with the Nova Scotia Women's FishNet, originally published in *Coastal Community News* 6, 6 (July/August) 2001, a newsletter brought out by the Coastal Communities Network, Nova Scotia, Canada. It was also published in *Yemaya* 7, August 2001, newsletter of the ICSF.

When Sisters Become Competitors

Coastal Women's Innovative Utilization of Trawler By-Catch in Ghana

Ragnbild Overå

For centuries, women have been in control of the processing and marketing of fish landed by fishermen along the coast of Ghana (Odotei 1991). Although women's social and economic positions vary among the ethnic groups involved in fishing (Overå 1998a), it is no exaggeration to state that women are the backbone of Ghana's fishing economy. For example, in the 1960s, as the principal actors in the fish market, women traders—and not the government or aid agencies—were the main source of investment during the period of innovation that accompanied the introduction of outboard motors in the canoe fisheries (Lawson and Kwei 1974; Vercrijse 1984). As a result, many women became owners of canoes, outboard motors and nets themselves, hiring men to fish for them (Lewis 1977; Overå 1993; Walker 2001). In today's motorized and relatively capital-intensive canoe fisheries, fishermen still depend on credit from the wealthiest women fish traders/canoe owners when they invest in new equipment or need loans for petrol.

Women's main rationale for investing in the otherwise male-dominated canoe fisheries was to increase the supply of fish for their processing and trading enterprises. From the 1970s onwards, in order to expand their businesses and fill seasonal gaps in the supply from the canoe sector, women began to utilize by-catch from the largely foreign-owned industrial sector. In the 1980s and 1990s, they utilized imported, frozen fish. Through their multiple utilization of local and external sources of fish supply, women have not only kept up the supply and distribution of valuable protein to the whole country, they have also accumulated capital through the marketing of industrially caught fish, which they invest in the local fishery.

A hierarchy exists among Ghana's female fish traders. This "female market hierarchy" (Robertson 1984) is a product of wide variation in women's income and social status, which affects, in turn, the extent to which they can afford to purchase fish from external sources. The most successful traders are those who are able to combine fish supplies from both local and external sources, whereby they are able to increase the scale of their business and stretch their activities beyond the hectic and short canoe fishing season. There are three ways of accessing external sources of fish: seasonal or long-term migration within Ghana or to neighbouring countries (Overå 2001); purchasing imported fish from wholesalers in the harbour city of Tema; or

contracting with trawler crews for the purchase of by-catch (Alverson et al. 1994). Success thus not only depends on a woman's social and economic position in the local community, but also on her ability to extend her personal business network to the city and to industrial companies.

This chapter focuses on access to trawler by-catch: that portion of the trawler catch that is commercially uninteresting, or illegal, to land because the fish are too small or consist of untargeted species. People in Ghana call this "let-go-fish" or "*seiko*-fish." *Seiko* is Japanese for "very good," and local terminology reflects the foreign involvement in the industrial fishing sector. Drawing on field work in 1991, 1994, 1995 and 1999 (Overå 1993, 1998a and 2001; Marquette et al. 2002) in a Fante fishing community, Moree, located in the Central Region of Ghana, this chapter tells the story of how by-catch from trawlers arrived as a new opportunity arising from foreign investments in Ghana's fisheries, and the way in which the local fish trader elite of Moree managed, in an entrepreneurial manner, to gain access to this new resource. Following a short discussion of the theoretical framework that informs the analysis, a brief historical overview of developments in Ghanaian fisheries, with a focus on the role of women traders in those developments, will be provided. The case study of Moree is concerned with the way actors in "traditional" and "modern" systems of fishing interact and the economic and social changes that occur in a local community as a result of women's entrepreneurship in relation to both systems.

Globalization, Gender and Entrepreneurship in Ghana

No place remains unaffected by the forces of capitalism and modernization: "The global is in the local in the very process of the formation of the local" (Massey 1994: 120). In Ghana, the coastal fisheries are directly and indirectly affected by international fuel prices and the international fishing fleet's whereabouts, and in Moree, household economies and gender relations in the fisheries never remain unaffected by these influences. However, although what Harvey (1989) called "time-space compression" has accelerated, global communication and economic integration are not new phenomena in coastal West Africa (Hart 1982). From across the Sahara and the Atlantic, through regional migration, trade and colonization, people on the coast of Ghana have encountered strangers who brought (and took back with them) new resources and ideas. The social construction of gender in the Moree fisheries has taken place within this context, and this case study thus explores "the interplay between global historical forces and local social relations ... through the prism of gender" (Grosz-Ngaté 1997: 1).

Traditionally, women in Ghana were not confined to the house or excluded from economic activity, and their central role in food distribution and other trades, both historically and at present, is well documented (Bohannon and Dalton 1962; Clark 1994; Nypan 1960; Robertson 1984). Especially on the coast, women encountered foreigners and new opportu-

nities: as traders in food and cloth, but also in slaves and export products like palm oil; as lovers and wives whose mulatto children got privileges through education or new trades; and as importers of new technology and distributors of new products from abroad (Greene 1996). To make money is seen as appropriate for women in Ghana, an integral part of the mainstream gender ideology—the context-specific ideas about gender-appropriate behaviour (McDowell 1997). The often rough style of the big “market mammies” is thus not considered un-feminine or inappropriate. Trade in some commodities—in fish, for example—is clearly defined as a “feminine” activity, while a man engaging in fish processing or in the selling of smoked fish in the market would be regarded as awkward, or at least as not particularly masculine. Women thus have a comparative advantage over men when new opportunities arise in the fish trade.

From the gendered entrepreneur perspective (Overå 1998a) inspired by the early entrepreneur model of Fredrik Barth (1963), women’s position in the Ghanaian fish market can be viewed as a gender-defined asset. Through certain socially accepted and gender-appropriate channels—such as extending credit to fishermen to increase fish supplies, or marrying a canoe owner who is willing to help his wife acquire a canoe, or building a house for the children including a son who will be the mother’s loyal captain—women are able to convert value from the female domain of market trade into the male-dominated domain of fishing. According to Barth, the conversion of value from one sphere of the economy to another in such a way that one’s stock of both economic and social capital increases is characteristic of entrepreneurial activity. In Ghana, the entrepreneurial strategy of connecting external sources of fish supply to locally based fish processing enterprises is an example of how women use their gender-defined role in the fisheries in a gender-appropriate manner in order to enter new economic niches.

Many studies have shown that the harsh adjustments that African governments had to make in the 1980s and 1990s to the new global economic order (Held et al. 1999) have led to the informalization of labour, an increase in unemployment (Meagher 1995) and a marginalization of women in particular (Connelly et al. 1995), resulting in the feminization of poverty. Twentieth-century Ghana was characterized by modernization—in the building of infrastructure, the construction of a national identity and the economic, cultural and political integration of this country into the world market. Over the last two decades, structural adjustment programs (SAPs) imposed by the World Bank, with the ostensible aim of liberalizing the Ghanaian economy, have tied it more directly to the system of global capital, resulting in predominantly negative impacts on living standards for ordinary people (Aryeetey et al. 2000). As central actors in Ghana’s economy, women have actively strategized to cushion themselves and their families from globalization’s negative effects while making the most of its positive ones.

This case study of Ghana's entrepreneurial coastal women will show that women's encounters with global forces do not always and inevitably result in marginalization. As elsewhere, the integration of local African economies into the global economy represents both opportunities and constraints for women, as for men, even though these opportunities are unequally distributed among the members of a community. The case study also suggests that in societies where women's economic independence and ability to explore new economic niches is accepted, the population may be able to utilize opportunities brought about by global forces that otherwise would have remained closed to the community as a whole.

Ghana's Fisheries

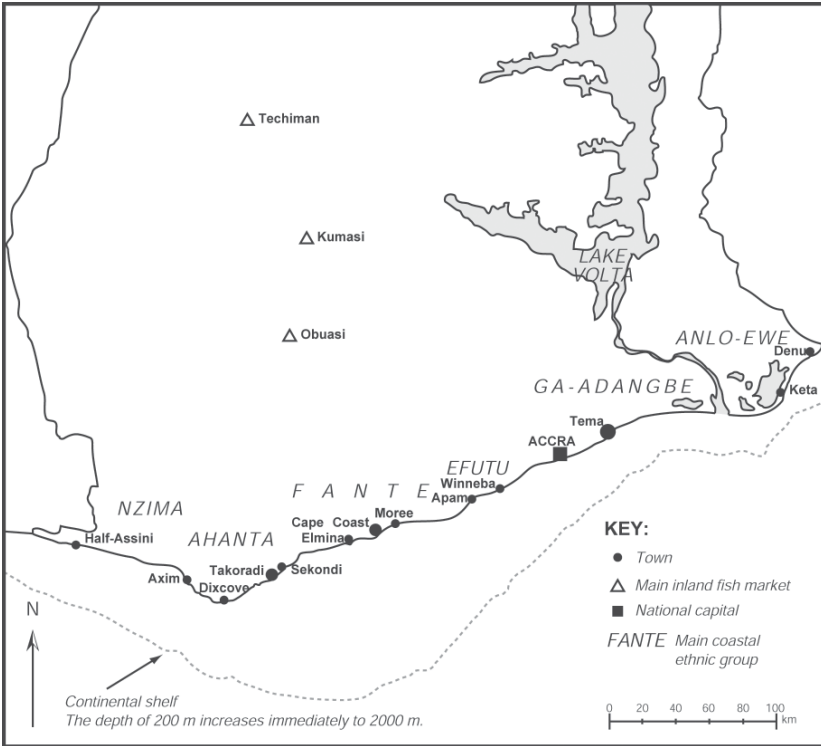
Marine fishing has a long history in Ghana, and Europeans reported the presence of many canoe traders and fishers in the fifteenth century. Gradually, a pattern of fishing evolved in which the Fante fished with set nets, the Ga-Adangbe specialized in line fishing and the Anlo-Ewe engaged in beach seine fishing (Odotei 1991; Figure 1). Among all these groups, the men fished and the women were, and still are, in charge of fish marketing.

There have been continual adaptations, imports and improvements in fishing technology in Ghana over the years. An Anlo-Ewe female trader, who also traded in slaves, imported the first beach seine around 1860 (Greene 1996). Probably the most important innovation in Ghanaian fisheries was the introduction of outboard motors in the early 1960s. Motorized canoes could travel farther out, and the fishermen could fish more. Since the fisheries of Ghana are highly seasonal, with the main herring (*sardinella aurita*) season falling between July and September, the outboard motor rapidly became an important tool that increased local fishermen's ability to land more fish during the months when it is abundant.

Investment in new technology requires capital. Unfortunately, government loan schemes to motorize the canoe fleet were not very effective (Lawson and Kwei 1974). The repayment conditions imposed by banks were difficult for fishermen to meet, since the required time intervals did not take into consideration the seasonal nature of their activities and income. Fishermen therefore turned to sources of credit within the sector itself—the wealthy women traders (Christensen 1977; Odotei 1991; Vercrujisse 1983). The traders gave credit to canoe companies for the purchase of equipment, and in return they received a portion of the catch until the loan was repaid.

In 1970, the motorization of the canoe fleet was estimated at 20–25 percent, and in 1989, more than 57 percent of this fleet had adopted the outboard motor (Hernæs 1991). The number of canoes in Ghana—not counting the many Ghanaian canoes fishing in other West African countries—has remained more or less stable at 8,000 throughout the last thirty years, but the size of the canoes has increased, and new and larger

Figure 1: Main fishing techniques and ethnic groups fishing along the coast of Ghana.



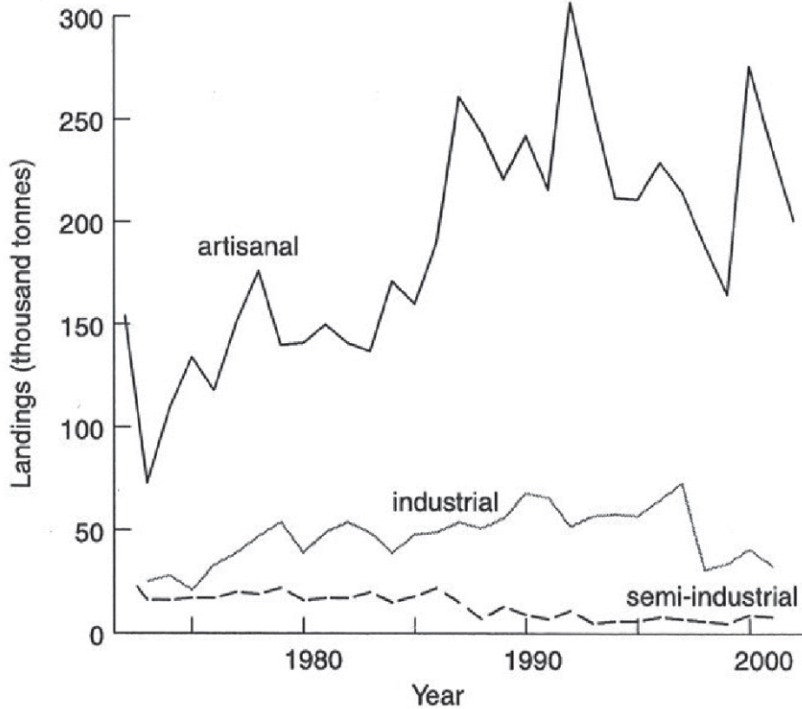
Source: Overå (1998a).

types of nylon nets and purse seines have been introduced. The result has been a remarkable increase in the canoe sector’s fish landings from 20,000 tonnes in 1960 to 300,000 tonnes in 1992 (Koranteng et al. 1993; Figure 2).

A local entrepreneur purchased the first deep-sea trawlers in Ghana in 1963. In the latter part of the 1960s, other private companies and the State Fishing Corporation (SFC) acquired several additional vessels (Hernæs 1991). All were built abroad—in the Soviet Union, Japan, South Korea, the U.K. and Norway. Some trawlers were given to the Ghanaian government as aid. By 1970, about thirty long-range industrial vessels were based in Ghana. In addition, the U.S.-based multinational company, StarKist Foods, Inc., operated a large tuna export industry through chartered foreign-flag vessels). Although the government adopted a policy of “Ghanaization” in the 1970s, Ghanaian/foreign joint venture companies formed and were allowed to open foreign bank accounts for the proceeds from tuna exports (Hernæs 1991).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, fish landings in the industrial sector

Figure 2: Ghanaian marine fish landings in Ghanaian waters, 1972–2001



Source: Atta-Mills, Aldeer and Sumaila 2004: 14

declined drastically (Figure 2), and several vessels became inactive (Hernæs 1991). The vessels of the SFC were mismanaged and poorly maintained, the political situation was very unstable and foreigners found it hard to make money in Ghana. With the liberalization policies of the 1990s, foreign investments were again encouraged and, by 1995, there were forty-nine trawlers and twenty-five tuna boats.¹ According to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, sixty-two trawlers were operating in Ghana in 1998.² Information on both Ghanaian and foreign ownership in this fleet is sensitive and hard to obtain.³ However, observation confirms that, as in the past, foreign involvement is primarily South Korean. Chinese and European companies are also involved in industrial fishing in Ghanaian waters. On board these vessels, the captains and engineers are usually foreigners who, in the case of the Koreans, are hired through an agency in Seoul. The crew, on the other hand, is usually recruited from among Ghanaian fishermen “hanging around,” as one of the Koreans put it, in Tema Fishing Harbour. Many fishermen have thus worked on a trawler at some point in their lives and frequently know someone among the crew. Such contacts have, as we shall see, proved useful to women traders in fishing communities like Moree.

The Organization of Fishing, Trade and Families in Moree

Moree is a fishing town eight kilometres east of the town of Cape Coast (Figure 1), with approximately 15,000 inhabitants, most of whom are Fante (one of the Akan-speaking peoples). The resident population varies with the fishing season, as a large proportion of the fishermen and women traders migrate westwards during the off-season, from October to April, leaving the town relatively idle until a minor fishing season begins in December and the migrants return after Easter to prepare for the major season that starts in June–July. In 1995, there were four hundred small canoes (twenty- to thirty-foot) with crews of eight to ten men, and one hundred big canoes (forty- to sixty-foot) with crews of up to twenty-five men, registered in Moree (Overå 1998a). All the big canoes and most of the small ones were equipped with outboard motors (88 percent in total) and drift gillnets (*ali*) or purse seines (*watsa*). Approximately 25 percent of the canoe owners in Moree were women.

The leader of the fishermen, whom they elect, is the *apofobene* (chief fisherman). He is their spokesman, supervisor and negotiator, and he is the link between the local community and the government (the Department of Fisheries). He has considerable influence, since fishing is the most important occupation in Moree. Just as there is a leader of the fishermen, there is a leader of the fish traders, the *konkobene* (chief fish trader). A *konkobene* is elected for life by the fish traders and must be a mature woman with extensive knowledge of the fish trade. Her main role is to be a mediator when there are conflicts among the women fish traders—for example, over the quantity or quality of fish. She also negotiates the daily “beach price” with the first canoe that arrives in the morning, and negotiates—together with the *apofobene*—resolutions to conflicts between fishermen and fish traders. These female and male institutions reflect the gender complementarity common to many West African societies, expressed in a dual-sex organization of parallel male and female power hierarchies (Moran 1990). This ideology is also the logic behind the division between fishing and marketing as distinct male and female spheres.

Before motorization and capitalization of the canoe fishery, each fisherman handed over his share of the catch to his wife or a female relative. She smoked and sold the fish, then gave the fisherman the amount of money they had agreed on. After selling the fish, she could keep the profit, or *bontodo*. Today, the sale of a canoe’s catch usually goes through a wholesaler, or *enam enyi* (woman selling fish). The *enam enyi* is usually a canoe owner’s wife, but she may be a canoe owner herself. Alternatively, she may simply be the most important creditor of the canoe company, which means that the canoe owner has to sell fish through her in order to repay his debt. Together with the *bosun* (the male captain of the canoe), the *enam enyi* is in charge of the sale of the catch. Canoe owners’ wives have priority over the crews’ wives in terms of how much of the catch they are entitled to buy at wholesale prices.

Some of the fish is salted and/or dried, but the bulk is smoked on traditional circular mud ovens. The fish is marketed year-round in Mankessim, forty kilometres from Moree, and some small-scale traders can never afford to go farther. Other traders travel to markets in Accra and other towns, but Kumasi, 200 kilometres from Moree, is the most important market during the “bumper season.” Traders who have large smoking and storing capacity can also go to Kumasi during the lean season when fish prices are high. This means that the marketing of by-catch or imported fish is particularly profitable during times of the year when fish supplies are hard to obtain from local canoes. Women who have access to external fish sources can therefore make substantially more money in the course of a year than those who rely only on local supplies of fish.

The large-scale traders/canoe owners have a crew of female workers who help in the carrying, washing, smoking and packing of fish. Many poor women attach themselves to rich women as loyal “helping hands” in exchange for a small payment or quantity of fish. In busy periods, the large-scale fish smokers trust a daughter or younger sister to sell their fish in Kumasi. The traders have also developed a “sending system,” a practical alternative to travelling with the fish themselves. Each woman has her own symbol—a distinctive piece of cloth—to identify her fish boxes and baskets. Both the truck driver and the trader’s partners in the marketing town know her symbol. The trader must also know the driver well: he is often entrusted with large amounts of money, carefully packed and marked with the symbol cloth. In a market system so grounded in credit and trust, the trader’s success depends on building a network based on experience, reputation and personal relations.

For Moree’s fishermen and traders, kinship is important to recruit labour, gain access to credit and establish a business network. The Fante practise a matrilineal kinship system and a duo-local post-marital residence pattern. This means that husband and wife (or wives) continue to live with other members of their own *abusua* (matrilineage) in the *fié* (house/home) where they lived before they got married. The wife lives and works in her own *fié*, but she visits her husband in his *fié* during the night. Investing in a house for one’s children and other relatives is the major goal for women who make money, and thus women head many *fié*. This is not only a means to ensure a social position and security in old age; it is also an economic strategy. A woman who has access to large supplies of fish needs a location where she can build many fish smoking ovens and supervise relatives and hired labour effectively in the difficult tasks of fish processing.

Although the matrilineage has first priority for most people in Moree, marriage is also important. Husbands do, to varying degrees, contribute to the upkeep of children. Husbands are also the most important source of credit and expertise for women who become canoe owners for the first time. Later, in the daily management of the canoe company and in the monitoring

of the crews' activities, sons—who, according to matrilineal ideology, will inherit the mother's property together with their sisters—are the most loyal partners of female canoe owners.⁴ Practically all female canoe owners in Moree thus have an adult son as captain on their canoes.

Male partners, whether through marriage, kinship or more contractual relationships, thus appear to be women's "keys" to success in the male-dominated fisheries. In the next section, we will see that "brokers" (Barth 1963) between the local canoe sector and the industrial fisheries, and between the female and male spheres of market and fisheries, also were crucial for women's access to by-catch from the trawlers.

Innovative Strategies in the Encounter Between Canoes and Trawlers

The first exchange of by-catch for food between a trawler crew and female canoe owners in Moree occurred in 1976. This *seiko*-business began with the entrepreneurial activities of Mr. Annan.⁵ He was a "copper-coloured" man (albino or *ofiri*), who was semi-literate, could speak some English and worked as a booker at the Moree truck station. Through his registration of fish baskets going to Kumasi and other markets, Mr. Annan was known and well liked by the fish traders in Moree. In the early 1970s, Mr. Annan got a job on the crew of a Korean trawler based in Tema. One day when the trawler, loaded with frozen fish, was passing by Moree on its way to Tema, its engine suddenly broke down. Luckily for the Korean captain, they had Mr. Annan from Moree among their crew. The Koreans sent Mr. Annan ashore to get hold of a tugboat in Elmina and buy fresh food provisions. Mr. Annan contacted one of the female canoe owners in Moree, who bought pineapples, watermelons, bread and beer, which she sent out to the anchored trawler. The trawler had to be repaired in Elmina, and the fish aboard was thawing, so most of it was sold to the Moree traders who sent canoes back and forth to fetch it. Contact was established, and the trawler started calling at Moree every time it passed in order to exchange by-catch for fresh food provisions. Through their ability to combine transportation at sea with food preparation/provision, female canoe owners rather than male canoe owners could easily, and in a gender-appropriate manner, get access to an entirely new fish resource.

As long as the food-for-fish barter did not involve fish of export quality, the trawler company and the Korean officers did not prevent the crews from making this little extra income. But gradually the business became more commercial, with the women paying large sums of money up front (a "*seiko*-contract") to Mr. Annan, who collaborated with the trawler company's clerks in Tema. Around 1980, approximately thirty canoes from Moree were buying by-catch, and several fishing vessels also became involved. Mr. Annan travelled back and forth between Tema and Moree with money,

bringing information to the women about when they could expect the trawlers so that they could start preparing provisions.

Through the entrepreneurial strategy of organizing the female canoe owners in Moree and linking them up with the trawlers, Mr. Annan became a broker who coordinated the activities of actors in the two production systems. His ability to act as a link between the foreign company and the local women was helped by the fact that he could speak English and create accounts, and by his acquisition of a car. Mr. Annan became a rich man, and “Mr. Annan’s people,” as the group of *seiko*-contract holders were called, became rich women.

The innovation of connecting fish processing and trade to a new source of fish supply also brought about social and economic change in Moree. The female canoe owners’ access to by-catch gave them an opportunity that the average fish trader could only dream about. Moreover, their trading partners, who were often female relatives, also benefited from greater supplies of fish and the increased activity in Moree. For example, the *seiko*-women did not have the capacity to process all the by-catch themselves, so they made fish available on credit to other women. Thus, more fish traders expanded the scale of their fish trade, several to the extent that they could invest in their own canoes.⁶ The young and the poor were hired as porters, fish cleaners, processing assistants and drivers. Furthermore, the profitable *seiko*-business enabled women to extend credit to many male canoe owners to purchase new outboard motors. The local canoe fleet as a whole thus benefited indirectly from the money made by women trading in by-catch.

Both national and local gender ideologies facilitated women’s entry into the new niche of *seiko*-trade. In general, established gender connotations in Ghana influenced the Ghanaian trawler crews’ preference for women as food suppliers and purchasers of fish. More particularly, the Fante matrilineal kinship system in which men, especially sons, have a vested interest in women’s investments, explains the high number of female canoe owners that made Moree an attractive place for the trawlers to land their by-catch. With the expectation that women’s engagement with the trawlers would benefit their lineages and the long-term interests of the community as a whole, the community approved the entrepreneurial *seiko*-women’s strategies. However, as we shall see, those who broke the value of redistribution of wealth in their quest for individual enrichment were considered to be neither proper women nor proper community members.

When Entrepreneurial Sisters Become Competitors

Two of the women who made careers on *seiko*-fish were Ampanyin (which means “senior woman”) and her younger sister Ekua. Ampanyin, born in 1939, as the eldest daughter, was taught the skills of fish smoking and trading by her mother. Ampanyin had her first child at the age of nineteen, in 1958, and “started her own” by migrating to Aboadze, near Takoradi, and buying

smoked fish to sell in Kumasi. By 1970, Ampanyin had given birth to three children, had divorced her first husband and had started buying fish from the cold stores in Tema. Ampanyin gradually established a considerable fish-smoking enterprise employing her sisters, children and porters, as well as women from other villages as seasonal helpers. Ampanyin's closest business partner was her younger sister Ekua, whom she taught everything she had learned from her mother and colleagues. Ampanyin, Ekua and their younger sister, Aba, operated one fish smoking enterprise together, centred around their mother's house, with Ampanyin as the managing director.

In 1977, Ampanyin married again. Her second husband was a rich canoe owner. Ampanyin became his second wife, which entitled her to half her husband's share of his canoe's catch. Around 1980, after more births and a growing fish business, Ampanyin bought her own canoe with savings from her fish trade and a loan from her husband. Her oldest son from the first marriage was now twenty years old, and he became her captain. The acquisition of a canoe enabled Ampanyin to get access to *seiko*-fish, and she became one of "Mr. Annan's people." Ampanyin's career now began to take off, and, as a result, her sister Ekua's trading business also thrived, since Ampanyin supplied Ekua with by-catch and fish from her own canoe on favourable terms. Ampanyin built her own house and became an important person in her *abusua* (matrilineage).

Around this time, Mr. Annan's activities and the transactions between trawler crews and female canoe owners appear to have gotten somewhat out of hand for the Ghanaian clerks in the trawler company in Tema. The extent to which Mr. Annan and his people sometimes also illegally bought fish of export quality is not clear, but the trawler company in Tema found it necessary to send a clerk to investigate and tidy up the situation in Moree. This was Mr. Brown, who, like Mr. Annan, was a semi-literate Fante, but not from Moree. He reduced the number of *seiko*-contract holders to ten women.

With the arrival of Mr. Brown, Mr. Annan was no longer the only broker. In the beginning, the two men cooperated, but after a while they came to have conflicting interests in relation to both the *seiko*-women and the trawling company in Tema. The problem was that Mr. Brown began to promote his own personal interests in the *seiko*-trade with strategies that were not socially acceptable in Moree.

Since Ampanyin was one of the remaining ten *seiko*-women, Mr. Brown also got to know her sister Ekua. Soon Mr. Brown married Ekua, and she bought a canoe with money from him. Mr. Brown also signed as a guarantor for a loan with the Agricultural Development Bank so that Ekua could acquire an outboard motor on credit, and of course, Ekua also got a *seiko*-contract. Three years later, in 1983, Ekua and Mr. Brown built a house next to Ampanyin's that was slightly bigger than that of the senior sister. Mr. Brown began to spend more time in Moree with his wife in their new house

and had similar arrangements with a wife in Tema and another in Winneba. He commuted among them, making arrangements with the trawlers to ensure that his wives were given priority in the supply of by-catch. Through his fusion of marriage to female canoe owners with the position of broker in a foreign trawling company, Mr. Brown made a lot of money.

With the collapse of the industrial sector in the late 1970s (Table 1), trawlers in need of provisions became a rare sight outside Moree, and the local fish traders had to rely on what the canoes could catch. On the rare occasions when by-catch was available, Mr. Brown favoured Ekua with this supply, and she became unpopular with the other women. However, there was not much that they or Mr. Annan could do to prevent Mr. Brown's manipulation of their access to by-catch, since he had the right contacts in the trawling companies in Tema. Mr. Brown even had a walkie-talkie to communicate with the trawlers at sea. At times, women sent their canoes out to purchase by-catch but were denied access, wasting a lot of petrol, because Mr. Brown had made a special agreement for his wife by walkie-talkie at the last minute.

Opinion in Moree began to turn against Mr. Brown, and many people began to talk about his strategies as being unfair and immoral. For example, he did not seem to take into consideration the Moree traders' consensus about fairness in trade organized through a hierarchical order. Mr. Annan had adhered to these arrangements, becoming the trusted cooperating partner of the elite women. Mr. Brown also did not seem to respect the value of redistribution to lineage members. He urged his wife to accumulate for herself and to share her profits with him instead of with her "own people." On several occasions, Mr. Brown behaved disgracefully. When Mr. Annan died tragically in 1990 and Mr. Brown did not attend the funeral or contribute financially to the bereaved lineage, public opinion in Moree turned against him completely. He had shown that he was not a man of honour.

The relationships between Mr. Brown and practically everyone in Moree, and between the sisters Ekua and Ampanyin, became increasingly strained. The sisters were no longer partners in the fish trade; they had become competitors for by-catch. Such a relationship between sisters contradicts the matrilineal ideology of unity. The conflict that developed between Ampanyin and Ekua was unheard of, and both of them were often talked about in town as "greedy troublemakers," as one informant put it. In the eyes of the elders of the sisters' lineage, Mr. Brown used his wife in Moree and his wives in other towns as vehicles to enrich himself by connecting them to the by-catch trade. This became a vicious circle for the wife: she made money because she got access to the exclusive by-catch contracts, but Mr. Brown made her invest the money with him instead of on her own for the betterment of the children belonging to her lineage. For example, Mr. Brown registered Ekua's house in his name. This is a very

unwise strategy in a matrilineal system, because the wife risks the husband's lineage claiming all the property upon his death. There have been cases in Moree, and elsewhere in Ghana, where wives have been stripped of all their property after the husband's funeral, despite their right to keep three-fourths of his property under the inheritance law of 1985 (Overå 1998a). The price that Ekua paid for maintaining Mr. Brown as her link to the by-catch was therefore high: she made a fool of herself in the community, she was the cause of much envy and she disappointed her relatives.

By 1999, the two sisters were still not on speaking terms, and their lineage elders regularly tried to find a solution through negotiation meetings. Ampanyin no longer got *seiko*-contracts, but she sometimes bought by-catch elsewhere, although not from her sister. Only Mr. Brown and Ekua, and two other female canoe owners from Moree, still had *seiko*-contracts. The by-catch trade had become more centralized, with those involved operating from a few larger towns like Elmina and Takoradi. Instead of landing the by-catch in Moree, Mr. Brown and Ekua rented large iceboxes in Elmina in which they could store the thawing fish. By moving the business out of Moree, they escaped their conflicts with the women who formerly thrived on the by-catch trade. After Mr. Annan had been squeezed out of business, those women were unable to establish new contacts in the trawler companies. Ampanyin tried many times to send her captain son to Tema to negotiate for *seiko*-contracts, but in vain, since he was illiterate (like herself), did not speak English and did not know the right people. Although the son was a useful male cooperation partner for the mother in the local fishery, he did not have what was required to gain access to resources at the level of the city and the industrial fisheries.

Social Embeddedness and Economic Viability

In Moree and other fishing communities in Ghana, fishing and fish trade are socially embedded economic activities. The recruitment of labour and cooperation partners is largely kin-based, the authority of traditional institutions such as the chief fisherman is respected, religious taboos are followed and lineage loyalty is a deeply felt duty. Those who break the rules of these collective institutions in their quest for individual enrichment will be sanctioned. Entrepreneurs—women or men—who do not redistribute their wealth may succeed economically in the short run, but they will not survive socially in the long run. In Moree, those who used socially unacceptable strategies to get *seiko*-contracts at the expense of the others finally had to move their business out of their hometown.

In the latter years' economic climate in Ghana, there is even less room for individual enrichment in Moree than during the heyday of the by-catch trade. The government's economic liberalization policies have resulted in increasing costs for food, health care, education and, most importantly, petrol. The cost of sustaining a large number of dependants (including

labourers) and the fuel costs of making a fishing trip, combined with the poor purchasing power of fish consumers in the country, are jeopardizing profits in the canoe fisheries. Many canoe companies have reduced their fishing effort in order to avoid the great losses that result from a motorized fishing trip without a good catch. The fishermen thus depend more than ever on credit from the fish traders. However, with the constant devaluation of the Ghanaian *cedi*, imported fish—the elite traders’ alternative to by-catch—is expensive, and making savings from the small profits is not easy. Credit from traders is therefore hard to come by, and even the large-scale traders/canoe owners find it difficult to finance the replacement of old equipment. This means less activity not only for the fishermen but also for the small-scale women traders and the “helping hands” who depend on employment and fish supply from their “matrons” and who can only periodically make an income in Moree.

A study of Moree by Marquette, Koranteng, Overå and Bortei-Doku Aryeetey (2002) confirms that the number of canoes, fishers and landed catches declined between 1992 and 1997. This trend seems to be driven by the macro-economic conditions rather than by any decline in the fish resources. Two major responses to the difficult economic situation can be observed among the population in Moree. One is the “regression” to less capital-intensive fishing technology in the form of small, sail-driven canoes (with monofilament nets), which are used alongside the large motorized canoes. The other trend, associated with the latter part of the 1990s, is increased migration among both fishermen and traders. For generations, Fante fisher people have migrated to seek good fishing grounds and markets (i.e., supra-local sources of fish) and to save money by staying away from social obligations, later investing at home (Overå 2001). When by-catch is unavailable, imported fish expensive and the burden of supporting dependants excessive, it makes sense to migrate to seasonal fisheries on other parts of the coast, or abroad for longer periods, to generate the savings required to participate in the major fishing season upon returning home.

Even if access to by-catch has become very limited, the social embeddedness and flexible adaptation of the canoe fishery—its ability to utilize several niches simultaneously or successively—has prevented the collapse of the sector.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the strategies by which female fish traders in Moree, by combining economic and social capital in an entrepreneurial manner, were able to enter the new niche that emerged with the industrial fisheries in Ghana. This development occurred as a result of an unusual local-global encounter. On one side was a fishing community whose local gender ideology allowed women not only to accumulate wealth in the female market domain but also to become owners in the male fishing domain. On

the other side was an industrial fishing sector supported by international capital but still depending on local labour and brokers to operate.

As this case study illustrates, globalization is not a one-way process of superimposition of capitalism on local communities: local people also engage actively in the encounter with global forces. People's responses to global processes often depend on where they are situated in a local "power geometry" (Massey 1994). While entrepreneurial women with capital, the right contacts and the willingness to take risks may find new niches in the local-global interface, others may be squeezed out or lose power. In Moree, the socio-economic stratification that followed after the motorization of the canoe fleet became even more pronounced when the capital owners strengthened their positions by engaging in transactions with external fish producers financed by foreign capital. Nevertheless, the young and/or poor women benefited greatly from increased employment by the new female elite and from redistribution of wealth within lineages. However, when this temporary source of expansion (by-catch) dried up, it affected not only the investment capacity of the elite women but also the well being of their dependants.

This case study suggests that communities in which women's economic participation and entry into new niches is encouraged have a greater potential to benefit from globalization than those in which women are confined to their traditional domains. However, when actors, whether male or female, begin to depend on supra-local resources, they also become more vulnerable to changes at the national and international levels, beyond their spheres of influence. Luckily for the fishers and traders of Moree, the *seiko*-trade did not transform the local production system, which is socially embedded and organized according to an ideology of gender complementarity. Although collective values may limit the capitalist expansion of this fishery, they also prevent a complete dependence on external actors and resources from developing, which would put the viability of this fishing community at risk.

Notes

1. Department of Fisheries Research Unit, Tema. Personal communication.
2. See <http://www.fao.org/fi/fep/ghana.asp> (website visited June 2001).
3. In an interview with BBC World Service on May 29, 2001, Ghana's fisheries minister admitted that there were ninety-three vessels operating in Ghana, which, according to him, was far more than the number allowed by law (see also Klein 1999).
4. In contrast, women who aspire to canoe ownership among the patrilineal Ewe and Ga-Adangbe find it harder to recruit their sons as captains. The sons' loyalty and effort tend to be invested in the canoe companies of their fathers or paternal uncles, where their long-term interests are vested. For a comparative analysis of female investment in the fisheries, see Overå (1998a and 2000).
5. The names in this case study are pseudonyms, but are all very common in Moree.

6. Interviews with female canoe owners in Moree in the 1990s (Overå 1998a), show that most acquired their first canoe during the late 1970s and early 1980s, towards the end of the most active period of the industrial fisheries. At the time, for several years, they were able to make money on by-catch trade.

Global Processes, Localities and Gender Identities

A Feminist Perspective on Changes in Icelandic Fisheries

Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir and Hulda Proppé

This chapter explores gender in relation to transformations taking place in Icelandic fishery-based villages in the context of globalization. Case studies in four villages reveal how Icelandic women and men have been coping with changing property regimes exemplified by the current fisheries management system. A feminist point of view can shed light on how gender is constructed in daily life in rural localities affected by global changes, and how various gendered strategies for dealing with change imply changing identities, resistance and compliance.

In the increasingly globalized fishing industry, conformity with market forces has been the overall trend. Concentration and centralization have intensified, while social programs have been downsized. So-called “big government” has been dismantled along with the simultaneous promotion of the market as the logical outcome of deregulation. In Iceland, these trends can be seen in reduced subsidies and in the privatization of the commons, leaving market mechanisms to optimize the fisheries biologically and economically. These processes have threatened many small fishery-based localities, which have been especially vulnerable because of their narrow economic base (Skaptadóttir, Mørkøre and Ryabova 2001). On both the national and local levels, the economic, social and symbolic meanings of the fisheries have changed.

Researchers examining the local aspect of globalization have viewed processes of localization in relation to global processes (Appadurai 1996; Friedman 1994; Hannerz 1996; Robertson 1995). Local populations responding to these challenges do not simply cling to traditional values but draw upon outside elements in their construction of local identity and strategies. New ideas and images from various sources are appropriated and used locally.

Icelandic fishery-based villages, although geographically isolated, are very much tied to the global economy. Globalization in these localities is reflected not just in economic restructuring and new technologies but also in the spread of ideas through the media. People in these places are well linked to the outside world by telecommunications. They are developing tourism for both Icelandic and foreign tourists, and many of them travel as

tourists to other places. A new kind of local identity is developing in which the locals have become more conscious of what it is that makes them special. The local is increasingly defined in terms of the global and connected to cultural distinctiveness. In the process, new globally shared meanings of the local are created (Robertson 1995).

In much of the literature on globalization and localization, gender is either missing altogether or women are portrayed as victims, cheap labour or bearers of tradition. Feminists have begun to challenge the lack of gender perspective (Bergeron 2001; Freeman 2001). Globalization theories can benefit from recent feminist literature on diversity and agency. In the making of local identity, women play an active role not just in preserving tradition but also in appropriating new ideas. Women and men apply different strategies in coping with new challenges, creating new gender-based identities in their attempts to make better lives for themselves. A feminist perspective can bring gender-based inequalities into view in peoples' daily lives. It can also raise questions about the purported neutrality of gender-blind science in relation to resource management systems, for example, one in Iceland that the Ministry of Fisheries has justified in scientific, "neutral" terms. Sandra Harding points out that "feminist research does not introduce political assumptions, values and interests into research fields that are otherwise value-neutral; it identifies the ones that are already there" (Harding 1995: 7). Feminists have criticized economic models in which peoples' agency is ignored or taken out of social context, or in which people are treated as individual agents with no social ties (Hewitson 1999).

Our case studies attempted to bring out gender as it is constructed in daily life in localities affected by global changes and to look at gender aspects of the economic transformations taking place. We carried out two studies in four fishery-based villages, for a total of five months from 1996 to 1999,¹ and we have followed developments in the two areas since then. Two of the villages are in the northwest (West Fjords) and two in the south. The larger West Fjords village has about 1,000 inhabitants, the smaller a little less than 500. In the south, the larger village has 4,600 inhabitants, the smaller about 1,100. The villages differ from one another, and none of them exemplifies Icelandic fishery villages. All have been affected by changes in the fisheries, but in various ways.

Fieldwork in the West Fjords in 1996 and 1997² included semi-structured interviews with twenty women and five men in two villages, asking them about the effects of recent changes on their lives and how they were responding to the fisheries crisis. Most of the women had lived in the villages or their vicinity for most of their adult lives. Many worked in fish plants, the primary employer of women, and the others had previously worked in the plant but now had other jobs such as teacher, clerical worker and shop assistant. Some of the women were, or had been, married to small-boat fishers, and although the study was aimed primarily at women's views, five

of these husbands were also interviewed to get their diverse perspectives. In 1999, Skaptadóttir returned to one of these villages to examine local coping strategies (Skaptadóttir, Mørkøre and Ryabova 2001).

Field research in the two villages in the south in 1998³ included interviews with sixteen women and two men, focusing on the effects of the individual transferable quota (ITQ) system on women in particular, but also on their communities. Women were asked about their participation in the construction, maintenance and reconstruction of the fisheries, the quota system and their communities. Most of the women were wives of small-scale fishers with access to quotas. Some of the women worked in fish plants or managed family firms in the fisheries. Others were not direct participants in the fisheries, but the quota system and recent social and economic changes in the village had affected their lives. In all these studies, we were interested in what opportunities people saw for participating as active agents in the fisheries and the community and how they felt about fisheries management.

As anthropologists, we did not simply do interviews but also gathered information from informal discussions with people. Through participant observation, we could get at local viewpoints that have been ignored in the national discourse. In interviews and discussions, we commonly found ambiguities and contradictions arising from the particular situations in which people found themselves. Qualitative methods allow for a close examination of socio-economic diversity, an aspect of life shared by most small, resource-based communities in the north. These methods also allow us to consider people's daily lives and the ways in which women and men talk about themselves. We regard our research and analysis as processes that are built on relations (Gudeman and Rivera 1995). The researcher must always be aware of the impact she or he is having on a society and the discussions going on within it by asking questions and being physically situated in the locality.

This chapter begins with a description of recent transformations in Icelandic fisheries and gender in fishery-based villages, examining their gendered effects by focusing on strategies and changing identities. We follow this with an analysis of resistance and compliance in the face of these transformations. Our aim is to bring forth voices that have until now been ignored or silenced and to show that the places and spaces that women occupy in these villages are part of a larger social context. We also want to show that there is more than one way to view what is happening in these villages and the reactions to these changes. People use the dominant ideologies of gender and power relations to construct their identity and to describe their agency and how they use it in daily life. But our understanding of social and gender relations includes an awareness that these are relations among people, incorporating both ambiguities and changes.

Changes in Icelandic Fisheries

Global market expansion can largely explain the social and economic changes that men and women are coping with in Iceland's small, fishery-based villages. This can be seen in the new market economy and in the state's commitment to market solutions in fisheries management. In Iceland, more than in other North Atlantic fishing nations, there is a strong belief in market solutions. This is exemplified by implementation of an individual transferable quota (ITQ) system, designed to bring economic rationality and efficiency to the fisheries. Initially, in 1984, the government established an individual quota (IQ) system as a temporary solution to problems of diminishing fish stocks and over-investment in vessels. The IQ system assigned quotas to owners of boats over ten tonnes that had been fishing during the three previous years, and quotas were distributed according to the amount caught in those three years. In 1991, the government changed the IQ system to an ITQ system, which meant that quotas became divisible and freely transferable among vessels over six tonnes. Since then, only those who own quota shares or can afford to rent them can fish. Others no longer have access to the resource.

Even though Icelandic law defines ocean fish as a common national property, with this system it has come to function as private property in the market. Loans can be taken out with future quotas as mortgage, and fishing quotas have become a valuable market commodity. Quotas are the key to gaining access to the right to fish and to the global economy, which is much larger than fisheries, individuals, localities or the nation. The quota system defines who has access to the economic revenues of the fisheries. In its construction, many individuals, localities and companies that had formerly participated in the industry were not taken into account.

The quota system has been debated in Iceland for the last ten to fifteen years, although the gendered exclusion of women's access has not been part of this discussion. Those who did not fish but were directly related to the fisheries in other ways played very little role in the construction of the ITQ system. Proponents of the system legitimized it with references to ideas of economic rationalization and a unified national effort to save the resource. Through this process, the state—members of the government and parliament—determined who would be considered actors and legitimate participants in the fisheries.

The ITQ system has resulted in the concentration of quota shares in the hands of a small number of large companies that now own or rent a great proportion of them. The number of small companies holding quotas has decreased dramatically (Pálsson and Helgason 1996). Larger Icelandic companies have also participated in the global fisheries economy by investing in fisheries in other parts of the world or sending ships to international waters where quotas are not as limited as in national waters. Thus, Icelandic fisheries are closely tied to the global market, and there are now many

international aspects to the national fisheries management system.

Increasingly, quotas have been moved to the capital region of Reykjavík and neighbouring towns, or to the more populated regions in the north and east. This has affected villages and regions in various ways. The two villages we studied in the West Fjords have been hit hard, having lost most of their quotas and thus the right to fish. The larger village in the south has access to much quota, and the smaller of these two has a strong fish market. The amount of quota shares governed by individuals is not as important in the smaller village as in other villages in Iceland, because boats from elsewhere bring their catch to its market, thus giving the village access to economic gains from the fisheries independent of quota ownership.

One of the consequences of the ITQ system has been a loss of locally based control over access to the resource. The inhabitants of many villages are facing socio-economic marginalization. Within villages, great inequalities have been generated between households that own quotas and those that do not. This was the case in the villages in our case studies. Many people have chosen to sell their quotas for a higher price than they would get if they went fishing themselves and have moved to the capital area. Those who remain must deal with little access to fishing, fewer jobs in the fishery and houses that cannot be sold.

Inequalities based on gender differences were embedded in the ITQ system from the beginning. Women were denied participation in the quota system when quotas were distributed to vessels instead of, for instance, to villages or municipalities. Many of the women we interviewed argued for quotas tied to localities. Although this would not have guaranteed women access—since men make most of the decisions about the fisheries—the women said that it would have secured more work in the villages for women. Most Icelandic men and almost all Icelandic women have no access to quotas, and women who manage quotas are few, reflecting women's economic marginalization in the local and national economy. Munk-Madsen (1997b) has analyzed another quota system in Norway that was presented as gender-neutral but also excludes women. In our research, gender inequality was clearly present in the fact that it was the husbands who were the registered quota owners and who could, and did, make decisions about the selling or renting of quotas without consulting their wives.

Villages have also seen a new emphasis on productivity in fish processing plants, which primarily hire women (Skaptadóttir and Rafnsdóttir 2000). Fish plants have been merged into fewer and larger units all over the country, and the largest plants have set up new production systems with more control over labour. Moreover, with more freezer trawlers going farther out into international waters, more fish is being processed at sea by men, resulting in fewer processing jobs on land. Ironically, because wages are low and new technology has increased the pressure in the workplace, many local women no longer want to work in the plants. Thus, despite fewer jobs in the industry

and an increase in out-migration, there are not enough workers for the plants. Instead of raising wages and making other accommodations for village inhabitants, managers are bringing in workers from abroad on temporary contracts. The greatest number of these comes from Poland and the majority are women. They have no choice but to work long hours, and they can easily be displaced or relocated to other plants when there is little fish. Some of these workers stay for a few years to save money and go back home, but others have settled in Iceland. They are valued as an asset in the villages exposed to out-migration, although many of them also move to the capital area after some years. These migrant workers constitute another aspect of globalization.

Gender in Fishery-Based Villages

A feminist analysis begins with the understanding that women and men are treated differently in society because of their gender, and that gender is integral to the structuring of societies, ideologies, economies, political systems and everyday experiences (Moore 1988; Scott 1992). It is also generally accepted that differences among women should be an important part of the analysis (Mills 1995; Moore 1994). The constructionist view of femininity and masculinity focuses on the way that the female and male genders are constructed in relation to, and in comparison with, each other. Power is central in this construction. Gender and gender identities change and are reconstructed through everyday practices and strategies. People define gender in the context of their own lives. In small villages such as the ones we studied, few definitions of gender are active simultaneously, and some are more dominant than others. The space to construct one's own identity is more limited in rural than urban areas (apparently the environment assumed in most post-structural analysis). In these villages, gender is constructed locally, but new global images and the privatization of resources affect men and women differently and influence gender identities.

A clearly visible gendered division of labour in homes, workplaces and village associations characterizes Icelandic fishing communities. The home is women's domain, and women clearly run the household from day to day, whereas men work long hours at sea or on land. Women are usually more involved than men in maintaining kinship ties and relations between households. In the fishery, men fish and women prepare men for fishing and process the catch, as in other North Atlantic fishery-based localities (Davis 1995; Gerrard 1995; Munk-Madsen and Larsen 1989; Skaptadóttir 1996). Men have been in control of local politics and the local fishery. This gender division is the main reason why women and men have different access to, and control over, the most valuable resources in Iceland.

Although women have not been in control of the fisheries, they are connected to the industry in various ways. As in other maritime societies, wives of small boat fishers commonly manage the finances of the boat, and

fishermen's wives generally act as heads of households with sole responsibility for household finances (Cole 1991; Hall-Arber 1996). Before freezing plants were established, women were seasonally involved in the processing of salted fish. Today, their work in the fish plants is no longer seasonal, and many of the plants are high-technology factories. Women's jobs in the plants are considered to consist of boring, low-paid work requiring no special skills. Women are aware of these negative attitudes, and many only work in the plants when they have no other options.

As managers of large and small fishery companies, men make most of the formal decisions regarding the renting and selling of quotas—decisions that affect both men's and women's lives. Men who operate small vessels discuss among themselves who is selling and renting quotas, in much the same way that they have always discussed local catches. In interviews and informal discussions with us, men referred constantly to figures and numbers in their explanations. Women did not refer to such details but focused more on the general effects of this system on their families and communities. Women's interest in the fishery varies, however.

Women are quota owners in a sense, as wives, although this property is usually registered in the husband's name, and women seldom make formal decisions about it. In our discussions with couples, men always talked about themselves as owners and actors with regard to quotas and boat operation. Women occasionally referred to common decisions or their attempts to influence their husband's decisions. Some recalled trying to put pressure on their husbands to sell or rent quota to obtain money for the household or to take a vacation. Others were against any selling and renting as a moral wrong against other villagers who would lose their jobs as a result. They emphasized the importance of keeping the access to the fishery within the village.

Strategies

Strategies are interlinked with the practices of daily life, the sense of individuals and groups, and the social fields or social structure of which the individual, group or village is a part. People devise strategies in order to make their lives better or more agreeable. There is a struggle for recognition of the way they choose to live out their lives, as well as a struggle for access to material, cultural or symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986). In Icelandic fishery localities today, we see these struggles: people are struggling for the right to live in their villages and maintain their identities, and for the right of access to marine resources. The concept of coping has been used to describe local strategies that result from processes of reflexivity. Aarsæther and Bærenholdt (1998) point out that various coping strategies are applied in different settings, and that coping strategies vary in form, content and level of success in the short and long run.

The strategies that people use to cope with new challenges involve agency—the ability of people to change, resist, accept or challenge the social

framework in which they find themselves. It is in the practices of daily life, according to Bourdieu (1990), where action and agency are given meaning. For Bourdieu, practices are the links between the structure of society and agency. Hence, they exist where the limited space for individual agency and difference within the social structure is situated. The scope to construct and play out one's individual identity and agency is more limited in small villages than in cities. The ideological framework—the social space or fields—in which men and women find themselves as gendered subjects is different; thus, their access to agency also differs between urban and rural contexts. The scope of gender construction is limited, because people's access to various resources is largely based on an ideological framework in which power and gender are interrelated.

In rural localities, women and men apply various coping strategies. Gender is embedded in institutions such as social networks, political connections, employment and access to resources. The ways people cope, as men and women, are incorporated into value systems and social networks. As long as women's and men's daily lives and realities differ according to gender, they will continue to have different problems to cope with and dissimilar ways of coping. Village women's coping strategies stress community and working together, whereas men respond more on individual and political levels. Existing gender divisions in the villages underpin these different responses.

The individual, the household and the community must be considered when examining gendered coping strategies. An important lesson from development studies is that when it comes to gender, one cannot assume that members of a household or community have common interests. Within these different but inter-linking social structures, there are conflicting interests that must be taken into account when coping strategies are constructed or analyzed. In Icelandic villages, the established institutionalized structures limit the ways that women and men cope (or not) and create new subjective meanings.

In our case studies, village women and men used different strategies to cope with changing situations. Women worked more on a village level, from the bottom up, using their social connections in women's associations, sewing clubs and kinship or friendship networks. In one village that had high unemployment due to the closing of the fish plant and the sale of almost all the quota from the village, the women's association organized meetings for the unemployed in a building owned by the association, and people met to discuss the problems and possible solutions. In all the villages, in different ways, women used their social ties in the sewing clubs and their knowledge of handicrafts, knitting and sewing to start handicraft centres, where women (and the occasional elderly man) worked together to organize and to market their handicrafts. They brought in experts to teach them how to work with various materials and to establish small businesses. These activities

were not necessarily coping strategies in the beginning in all cases, but after a while they began to be used and identified as such. In all the villages today, there are handicraft centres that have a primarily economic function, selling products, but that also serve as social and cultural centres, meeting places and venues for cultural activities. In contrast to the women, men have emphasized strategies based more on market solutions and individual action. They talked about starting up new industries or how they maintained their individual family's well-being. Their strategies were more conscious, planned and within formal channels.

Both women and men used their everyday practices as the basis for thinking out strategies and putting them into action. Both men and women emphasized that it was not enough to maintain employment and social services, although they talked about these as the most basic needs. Many of them argued that maintaining social and cultural life was essential to making the villages more inhabitable. Most social activities, and many diverse associations such as choirs, Odd Fellows clubs, sports teams and women's associations, are single-gendered or gender-divided to some degree. Those associations that are not gender-specific often have different levels of activities divided by gender. For example, in a local rescue team, men's activities involve rescuing after an accident has happened, and women's activities focus on accident prevention and safety education for children. Most inhabitants are active in more than one of these associations.

Although the associations were not created as strategies, they affect the way women and men organize themselves in coping with current changes. They create ties among members, building a sense of community and strengthening emotional connections—not necessarily harmonious ones. Participation in such organizations is sometimes a planned individual coping strategy for dealing with crisis, but often it is an unconscious tactic. These organizations may sometimes become active agents, developing strategies and acting on them at the village level. Municipal authorities often emphasize their importance in times of crisis for creating a sense of unity and community in a village. Some cultural activities are part of a localization process and are thus more direct coping strategies, and women dominate in organizing and participating in these activities. A typical example is the village celebration, during which those who have moved away come and stay for a weekend and participate in local cultural events.

The diverse aspects of everyday life maintain and re-create relationships that people have with their surroundings. Based on their daily experiences as gendered subjects, women and men create and work out their different ways of dealing with change and struggle. In these activities, they use their agency and gender to create their identity, sameness and difference in relation to new property regimes.

Changing Identities

When people try to cope with social change locally, as groups or individuals, it affects their identities. Identity is no longer seen as something fixed, existing solely within individuals. It is seen as flexible and public, socially constructed and multiple (Eriksen 1993; Hall 1997; Moore 1994). When we examine identities related to gender, location or nation, we need to combine the different aspects that together produce an identity in a particular place and time. The ways we choose to talk about ourselves do not occur in a social vacuum but must be placed in a social context (Billig 1995). Common or individual identities, such as those of nationality or locality, often involve generalization and simplification of daily realities. They are based on cultural ideas of gender that are established and maintained in the everyday.

Among the groups of women we encountered in the four villages, the most common features shaping their identities were their roles as wives, housekeepers and mothers. They put much work and effort into creating beautiful homes for themselves and their families. The homes were clearly spaces for women to create and show their identities and their ideas of self. For men, working long hours and being away from the home constituted important aspects of being a real man in the villages (Skaptadóttir 1996). In the same way that nationality has become part of people's global identities, locality in these marginal areas has become part of the way people define themselves, and maintaining their homes has become integrated into local identity.

Defining oneself as part of a locality is not new. Inhabitants of villages and towns have always defined themselves in comparison with nearby communities or even with larger cities. In Iceland, this can be seen in the common practice of hiring historians to write a local history. What is different now is that this local identity includes the idea of having a unique "culture" based on a particular landscape and history distinct from others, not just from nearby villages but from the larger world. This particular culture must then be made presentable to tourists and other outsiders.

The societal changes we described above have had an impact on local gendered identity formation in the villages. Studies in the late 1980s found that many women took pride in their work in fish processing because they were "providing wealth for the nation" (Bærenholdt 1994; Skaptadóttir 1995). Women talked about how their jobs in the fishery contributed to the welfare of their communities and the nation as a whole. These views have changed greatly in the last decade. During our fieldwork, there was no longer any talk of contributing to national wealth. Women were still proud of working hard, but they did not explain the importance of their work in terms of the survival of their communities or the welfare of the nation.

Men's identities are changing as well (Skaptadóttir 2000). Until the 1980s, fishermen in Iceland had a symbolic role as national heroes providing national wealth. They were seen as insightful and courageous. Skippers were

symbolic of a masculinity expressed in individual initiative and personal freedom (Óðinsson 1997; Pálsson and Durrenberger 1983). In a popular radio program in the 1970s, wishes were sent to fishermen and songs were played in their honour. Through this program, most Icelanders got to know the fishermen's songs, which described true masculinity—men who lived dangerously, who fought and conquered nature far away at sea (nature was presented as feminine). Fishermen were proud, and they dreamed of the women waiting for them. In these images, men were active agents and women passive. However, a positive image and a certain amount of respect were attached to fishermen's wives, who stood by their men and played the role of admirers waiting for their men to return. Women showed their strength by not complaining or expressing worries about their husbands and other male kin out at sea.

Under the new fisheries management system, there is no longer the same competition among skippers, as each catches a pre-defined amount of fish. Consequently, images of fishermen have changed, and they are no longer national heroes. One symptom of changing attitudes is that the formerly taboo subject of the emotional and psychological effects on men isolated for long periods of time at sea is now discussed publicly. The new heroes are those who are able to take economic advantage of the system, investing in fisheries abroad in a way that is seen to best serve national economic interests. Fishermen get very little space in the new national discourse. Those who fill the news columns are the quota owners and those who control the resource and are involved in fisheries globally, perhaps exporting processing technology or investing in industries in other parts of the world. This is a very masculine image. Being a fisherman's wife also no longer has the same esteem and does not hold the same attraction to young women. In the images that have come with economic change, fishermen and their wives have lost their symbolic role in the national discourse on masculinity, femininity and what it means to be an Icelander. Thus, they have to cope with creating new identities for themselves. These new identities are based on global, national and local images of women and men and are constructed both as resistance to, and as compliance with, the existing categories.

Resistance and Compliance

A question that emerges from the feminist perspective on gender, identity and agency is whether gendered strategies involve resistance or compliance (Moore 1993). Resistance and compliance are important and complex issues related to power differences between women and men. There is resistance, or struggle, between definitions of the social world, and it is within the context of this struggle that people define their identity. This is the location of the dynamics of daily life. Activities played out on a conscious, semi-conscious or unconscious level may be forms of resistance or compliance, or

of both. It is often only with an historical reading that we can see the forms of resistance and compliance in activity and individual agency.

Studies of resistance have focused on institutionalized resistance; the few existing studies of everyday, semi-organized resistance are more recent (Ortner 1995). There is some ambivalence about what constitutes everyday, individualized resistance. For example, how do we determine that a certain act is resistance? Are women complying with dominant gender images and relations that subordinate them to men, or are they resisting them in their strategies? Moreover, when is resistance really resistance? Moore points out that "issues of desire, identification, fantasy and fear all have to be addressed" (1993: 50). It is also not enough to view strategies of resistance and compliance from a strictly economic perspective. The many factors that motivate actions originate in different social and economic arenas. Fear of social or economic isolation, for example, can motivate people to comply with certain ideologies or behaviours even though they may ideologically oppose them. Most of the people in our studies were against the ITQ system, but in order to continue their livelihoods in the fisheries, they had to comply with the rules that were set. For women, strategies can involve both resistance and compliance. Many of the women we talked to said that they wanted their husbands and sons to play more of a role in the household and, as such, they resisted local ideas of gender and gendered places. At the same time, they viewed the kitchen and the home in general, as their place.

Forms of resistance vary within a society, and by looking at these, we can see where power is located (Abu-Lughod 1990). Resistance, on both an institutional and everyday level, has always been part of societies but is concealed. Through concealment, a sense of continuity within society is maintained. Thus, concealment is important both for society and individuals. The notion of continuity helps us to see how women have ambiguous relationships with resistance and compliance in their daily activities and identities. Women struggle to find ways to live their lives in a society structured to deny them, because of their gender, participation as actors in the economics of fisheries in the new property regime. At the same time, society needs women's work and other activities to ensure its continuity. Throughout this process, all actors conceal the definition of the gendered injustice, so that women are, in a way, fighting an invisible enemy. Their daily resistance has to be in compliance with the dominant ideology for their own, their household's and their community's sake.

The women we talked to sometimes hinted at differences between households, or between men and women, in the fisheries, but at the same time they pointed out aspects of the sameness binding them all together. In the West Fjords villages, the concealing of differences in the community and between men and women was more noticeable than in the south. Women put more emphasis on differences between their own and other regions. They would often talk about the injustice of the system and the

inequalities it created in the villages, but without referring to particular cases. They described conflicts between men caused by the selling or renting out of quotas, and about sudden, unjust wealth in some households. Even those benefiting from the system generally agreed that it was unfair. But many women and men repeatedly changed the subject when asked about gender-based differences in access to the fisheries resource and its benefits. They would redefine the question and understand it on a personal level based on their own experience or behaviour. Most women did not see their lack of access to the resource in terms of women's overall limited access to national resources, preferring to explain it with reference to their own individual actions.

In the south, where inhabitants of both villages have more access to jobs outside the fisheries and a choice of more than one fisheries company to work for, the voicing of differences was more tolerated. Even so, it was not seen as a form of resistance, and there was still compliance with the idea of sameness within villages. A woman in her fifties, married to a fisherman with whom she manages a small fishing boat with quota, was asked if the quota system had created divisions in the village. She denied that it had, saying that all stories of divisions were based on envy, and that this was backbiting from people who were not participants in the system and had no understanding of how it worked. According to Scott (1985), backbiting is a form of everyday resistance, especially when done by people who lack power.

Another woman in her forties from the same village had participated in the fisheries with her husband and kin in a small-scale fish-packing firm that had closed because of the rising cost of fish and lack of access to quotas. She argued that the system had indeed created a class-division in the village and a new "aristo-elite" of quota owners. While talking about this, she laughed nervously and tried to minimize the weight of her words.

Women's and men's gendered identities are formed in the process of developing strategies and agency. Notwithstanding some cases of resistance, our studies found more examples of women complying with than resisting dominant gender images as they developed coping strategies. By establishing handicraft centres, the most successful and visible strategies of women in these villages, women reinforced a certain acceptable categorization. They were creating, defining and acting out their agency in a gender-based way. Gendered ideas of masculinity meant that men's participation in handicrafts was limited to older men, and they used more "masculine material" than the women used. New gendered categories create new boundaries between the feminine and the masculine, and the content of those categories changes. An example of new boundaries is that with the new handicraft centres, women have created a public space for themselves in localities where men have dominated public space.

Women who did things that were not considered feminine, thereby resisting their ascribed gender roles, did not get positive feedback on their

femininity to the same extent as those who complied with gender ideals. For example, one woman we interviewed took on a job unloading boats, an activity considered masculine, in order to increase the household income. This could be seen as a coping strategy that implied some degree of resistance, as she was not complying with the image of a good woman in the village. However, this woman expressed her femininity in other ways, such as involvement in women's circles and her children's school activities, reinforcing her gendered identity to herself and the community. This woman was talked about (to us and others) behind her back and was indirectly teased. She was made to feel that she was in the wrong place—but she also told us that she was aware of the gossiping and being considered “different.”

In analyzing our data with regard to resistance and compliance, we asked if men and women had different roles in this (Aretxaga 1997) and how gender relations determined and defined the various forms and meanings of resistance. From our discussions with women, we could see that much of their resistance took place in their everyday routines. Most women showed compliance with the ideologies of their localities and with the new fisheries management system, which they described as a system you could not argue with, one in which you must participate even if you were against it in principle. The same compliance was true of the men we spoke to, especially the small-scale fishermen. They were against the system but felt that if they did not participate they would become losers, economically and socially, because their identity depended on being fishermen even though fishing counted for only part of their yearly employment. The forms of resistance they talked about included taking fish from the boat home and not counting it in their quota share. It was a form of resistance that only they could see, and it was limited, but it had symbolic meaning for the fishermen's households and perhaps the community. It made them feel that they were not letting the system completely rule their relationship to the fisheries. This form of resistance is so weak that it does not affect the functioning of the management system, and the system's managers do not usually even notice it.

Conclusion

Iceland's ITQ system was implemented nation-wide by the government to save a primary national resource and to rationalize the fisheries. The ITQ system is an example of the market solutions characterizing neo-liberal globalization and the increasingly global fishing industry. The designers of this management system did not take into consideration the varying capacities of people and places to deal with it. Instead, they presented the system as a scientific, neutral model, ignoring inequalities based on gender, locality and different relationships to the fisheries. The new management system resulted in a new fisheries property regime, as access to fish is now based on a system of quota ownership that functions like private property.

Our research in four fishery-based villages revealed some of the

differences in people's abilities to cope with economic transformation. We combined an examination of globalization with gender analysis to shed light on diversity and agency in the local context. We did not want to portray villagers as simply victims of these circumstances but to see them also as active agents. Gender differences and inequalities are embedded in social institutions and in access to resources. They are not external variables, but an integral part of people's agency. Gender was, and continues to be, constructed in the process of societal transformation.

In the changes that have taken place in Icelandic fishing villages during the last fifteen years, the new property regime affects women and men differently, and they consequently respond differently. The four villages in our studies were affected in dissimilar ways as well. In one, there is a high rate of quota ownership, whereas in another, there is no quota left at all. However, people in all the villages raised similar concerns about the social and economic impacts of limited access to the resource. Although these concerns were not about gender differences in access, we found strong gender divisions in all the villages with regard to the fisheries. Consequently, women and men had different strategies for their households and communities, strategies that implied both resistance and compliance with the social framework. Gender identity has been changing nationally and locally, and new images of women and men are being created, not simply as a consequence of global reality but also as a part of it. Both men and women showed some everyday resistance, but mostly compliance, to conditions in their village and to the new management regime. It was primarily men who showed open, formal resistance by participating in the official discourse of the fisheries management system, be it in town-hall meetings, in the media or through other venues.

Our analysis of changing property regimes in Icelandic fisheries has highlighted the way that gender-based inequalities affect men's and women's access to resources. Access is based on pre-existing gender divisions within local communities, which are more or less taken for granted and not questioned. We have also shown that economic processes are embedded in society and culture. This becomes clear when we examine gender, identity, resistance and compliance in relation to resource management systems such as the ITQ. These processes explain the global differences to be found in the wealth of women and men.

Notes

1. In order to maintain anonymity in a small country such as Iceland, we have not named the villages.
2. Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir conducted fieldwork in the West Fjords villages in the summers of 1996 and 1997, with Hulda Proppé as her research assistant.
3. Hulda Proppé conducted field research in the two villages in the south in the spring of 1998.

Not Amusing¹

Compiled from information provided by Sushila Cordozo of Stree Shakti Sadan, Mumbai, also a member of the National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF), about fishing communities located next to one of India's largest amusement parks.

In recent months, about fifty thousand people from the traditional fishing communities of Gorai, Culvem and Manori in Mumbai have been trying to focus the attention of the authorities, the media and the general public on developments in their neighbourhood. These developments are affecting not only their livelihood, but also the ecological integrity of the sensitive and rich ecosystem that gives them this livelihood. At the forefront of this struggle have been the women of these communities.

Six years ago, India's first and largest amusement park, Essel World, spread over an area of sixty-four acres, coming near to their communities. Owned by a powerful industrial group, this park has been a big success and attracts up to ten thousand visitors per day.

The local communities are quick to point out that they have been affected in several ways by this park. Visitors are taken by park ferries across the creek, and these ferries have, in the past, damaged the nets and boats of local people fishing in this creek. The park's daily requirement of approximately twenty million litres of fresh water, drawn from underground sources, is diminishing ground water levels and leading to salinity ingress. The enormous amount of waste generated by visitors to the park is dumped untreated into the nearby sea, affecting coastal fish resources.

Moreover, while this "state of the art" park has access to all facilities, the fishing communities close to it, though also part of the Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation, are still deprived of basic amenities: piped potable water, proper roads, sanitation or drainage facilities, uninterrupted supply of electricity, adequate health and education facilities, etc.

Plans to expand the operations of this park are now underway. An additional area of about 700 acres of land was allotted for the purpose by the erstwhile government of the state (province) of Maharashtra in May 1997. What is significant is that the land allotted is actually mangrove area. The vital functions performed by these remaining mangrove areas in an overpopulated and polluted city like Mumbai need not be elaborated. This allotment is also in clear violation of the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification of 1991, which seeks to protect coastal resources, as well as fragile natural resources along creeks and natural channels.

Since the allotment, mangroves in the area are being systematically

destroyed. An illegal 1500-metre dam, constructed under cover of night in April 1998, stopped the natural flow of tidal water and obstructed the free plying of the small boats used by the community. As a result of the dam construction and the use of chemicals, mangroves in about half the 700-acre area have perished. Despite official orders, the dam has still not been broken to re-establish flow of tidal water. In April–May 2000, there was yet another attempt to construct yet another small dam. However, as a result of opposition by local people and an order from the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, this activity was brought to a halt.

Local villagers have undertaken a series of actions to seek justice. They have come together to form a Joint Action Committee. They are demanding action to protect and regenerate the mangroves. They are demanding recognition of the right of fishing communities to live in dignity off the resource base they have depended on for generations. They are seeking to question the meaning of what is seen as “development.” For this, they have undertaken a series of protest actions using non-violent means. They have also taken the case to court.

In order to make money, the rich are able to displace people and destroy the environment. The vast majority of people depending on these life resources are the victims. In the process natural capital is destroyed and fishing communities are displaced.

Note

1. This chapter was originally published in *Yemaya* 4, August 2000, a newsletter of the ICSF.

A Bottom-Up Approach to the Creation of a Marine Protected Area in San Felipe, Mexico

Gender Relations, Governance Mechanisms and Globalization

Katherine Savard and Julia Fraga

Joint ventures, privatization and foreign direct investment are one face of globalization within fisheries. A second, related face includes international development initiatives designed to grapple with the problem of resource degradation and related challenges associated with achieving sustainable development. Encouragement from international development agencies is fuelling interest in integrated management on the part of governments, non-government organizations and research institutions in many parts of the world. Too often, however, this interest exists more in rhetoric than in practice. In addition, supporters of local integrated management of marine protected areas (MPAs) often refer to this as community-based management without acknowledging that communities are not homogeneous entities. While communities can provide spaces for cooperation in relation to access to, and use of, natural resources, the extent to which these spaces ensure equitable access and use depends on the hierarchies and power relations within these communities. Gender relations are an example of relations within communities that are usually hierarchical and that not only influence the effectiveness of conservation initiatives but are also influenced by them.

In the Caribbean, as in other regions of the world, management of marine and coastal resources is generally centrally controlled by national governments. Here, as elsewhere, the effectiveness of centralized management regimes is being called into question by mounting evidence of resource decline and the degradation of ecosystems. In response, Caribbean governments are experimenting with the establishment of marine and coastal protected areas, a novel conservation tool in fisheries management that often includes attempts to decentralize management responsibilities. Unfortunately, such protected areas are often established in the absence of in-depth knowledge of complex social and ecological contexts and without the effective participation of local communities.

In Mexico, the National Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity calls for the promotion and consolidation of *in situ* conservation initiatives such as marine protected areas, as well as other kinds of ecosystem management, fisheries regulation and territorial regulations (Secretaría del Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca 2000). There are 119 protected

natural areas in Mexico at the federal level, of which the majority are biosphere reserves. Among these, the creation of land-based protected areas preceded initiatives to create marine protected areas. Both types have generally been initiated by the central government at the request of scientific and academic groups that have fought for the establishment of these areas and for control over management. Initiatives to establish marine protected areas (MPAs) have rarely come from local or municipal bodies. Those that do are frequently not recognized by the central authority due to incompatibility between these initiatives and the visions and models associated with modern conservation. Those few initiatives that do come from local communities do not always promote equity, including gender equity.

This chapter uses a case study of the formation and management of a marine reserve in San Felipe, Mexico, to illustrate how such an initiative might originate in a local community without producing equitable outcomes for all members of the community. The research was carried out as part of the project, "Community Management of a Marine Reserve in San Felipe, Mexico," one component of the Caribbean Coastal Resources Community Management Program sponsored by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) between March 2000 and August 2001.¹ The study used interviews and survey questionnaires with groups of households from four geographic areas in the port. We interviewed women from sixty-five households (13 percent of the total in San Felipe) and conducted key informant interviews. We also surveyed 175 households (33 percent), representing four categories of informant: fishermen in cooperatives, fishermen who were not cooperative members but were involved in tourism, merchants and ranchers. The objective was to evaluate their knowledge, preferences and interests in the MPA. We also interviewed ninety-one male and female students (representing 17 percent of San Felipe households) at secondary and preparatory schools, concerning their opinions and perceptions of their parents' work inside and outside the household.

The chapter opens with a discussion of fisheries management and governance in the Caribbean. This is followed by a description of the fishing economy of San Felipe, on Mexico's Caribbean coast, including gender relations and the relationship between the contemporary crisis in San Felipe's fisheries and the recent formation of a women's cooperative in that community. We conclude with a discussion of an initiative to establish a local MPA in 1995 and its consequences for gender relations.

Our gender analysis of the knowledge, preferences and interests of San Felipe residents in relation to the MPA was guided by the hypothesis that the patterns of male-centred decision making, authority and control in the household and the community would be reproduced in the management of the MPA as a male sphere of work.

The case study shows that in San Felipe, in both old and new practices to conserve fish and coastal resources, gender roles have been reinforced,

benefiting the male fishing sector. However, it also reveals that women have not been entirely passive in the face of such challenges. Some have taken steps to open up space for action in fisheries and coastal management, as with the recently formed women's cooperative, "Women Working at Sea."

Fisheries Management and Governance in the Caribbean

The Wider Caribbean includes thirty-five continental and insular states and territories in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea basins. There are eighty million inhabitants living in the Wider Caribbean Islands and coastal areas, and twenty million tourists visit each year. The region is a kaleidoscope of social, political, economic and natural resource systems (Ovares and Gutiérrez 1999; United Nations 2001).

In most countries of the Wider Caribbean, the contribution of the fisheries sector to national economies is considered to be relatively modest, but its potential is generally not well documented (Haughton 1998). In general, live marine resources are not abundant, especially in the eastern area, in comparison with other regions of the world. This situation is the result of the relatively narrow Continental Shelf and the fact that a considerable part of the region is not exposed to the effects of upwelling. While the fisheries sector has received less attention than other economic activities, such as agriculture, it constitutes an important source of food in the region, and fishing, mostly artisanal or small-scale, represents an important activity in many coastal communities (McConney 1998).

In the Caribbean, inshore marine resources were abundant until the last few decades, but these are now threatened by overexploitation and environmental degradation (Sandersen 1995). Despite a lack of information about marine resources, symptoms of overexploitation, habitat degradation and loss of marine biological diversity are evident (Haughton 1998; Ovares and Gutiérrez 1999). Increasing pressure on the marine environment is related not only to fishing but also to population growth, urban development, expanding tourism, oil and gas production, shipping and coastal agriculture.

Fisheries management is relatively new in the Caribbean. Until recently, many countries had weak legislation and no fisheries management plans (Brown and Pomeroy 1999). Where it exists, fisheries management is usually centralized and paternalistic, with the state playing a leading role. Given the small size of some countries, their population density, their limited financial resources and the fact that fisheries is not considered an important sector, it has not always been practical to have separate fisheries management units. As a result, fisheries are often embedded in a larger ministry such as agriculture. Often, there are overlapping responsibilities and a lack of inter-departmental linkages among ministries whose functions and decisions affect the fisheries. Government fisheries administrations tend to be understaffed and lacking in expertise, pointing to the need for exchanges, dissemination of information and building of partnerships among

governments, non-government organizations, research institutions and local organizations (Chakalall et al. 1998).

A pan-Caribbean approach to marine resource management is necessary, not only because marine resources and ecosystems are threatened but also because the countries share common ecosystems and fish populations. With the introduction of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), Caribbean states faced new responsibilities and requirements for which they were not prepared. Given the lack of financial resources, the scarcity of expertise, overlapping EEZs, migratory stocks and shared problems such as pollution, a pan-Caribbean approach is perhaps the only alternative for meeting these new responsibilities (Blake 1998; United Nations 2001).

In recent years, governments have established MPAs throughout the Wider Caribbean as a way of contributing to sustainable use of the marine environment. By 1994, there were 1,307 protected areas in the region, covering more than 116 million hectares. Close to 25 percent included marine or coastal habitats. Those who are involved in the management of these MPAs face significant challenges related to lack of experience, staffing shortages and limited financial resources to deal with the complex ecological and social systems involved. Moreover, MPAs are often established with insufficient information about the ecological and social characteristics of the areas affected (United Nations 1996).

National governments are the primary actors in the establishment and management of most Caribbean MPAs. The involvement of local stakeholders varies greatly, but their role in management seems to be limited, a situation related to the reluctance of national governments to devolve responsibilities. Nevertheless, local stakeholder involvement is necessary if MPA goals of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development are to be met (Adler 1996; Mascia 1999). One reason for this is that many governments do not have the capacity to monitor resource users effectively, with the result that regulations are commonly ignored.

The inadequacy of current state-centralized management of marine resources in the Caribbean calls for new approaches. This realization has led to a recent upsurge of interest in resource user participation in management, based on the tenet that local stakeholders must have a sense of ownership and responsibility in coastal resource management (Chakalall et al. 1998; Jorge 1997).

Organization is a prerequisite for effective participation by local stakeholders (McCay and Jentoft 1996). In the Caribbean, there are few local organizations and those that exist are weak, limited in geographic scope and in their membership base. The local organizations that exist do not usually have the capacity to carry out the functions of co-management or community-based management and would need to be strengthened (Brown and Pomeroy 1999; Chakalall et al. 1998; Jentoft and Sandersen 1996; Sandersen 1998). Furthermore, devolution of power and responsibility

may entail context-specific agreements among states and other parties, reflecting the diversified political, cultural and socio-economic conditions in Caribbean countries. It may also require revision of current legislation (Brown 1998; Chakalall et al. 1998).

The participation of local stakeholders and the sharing of power and responsibilities are relatively new approaches for natural resource managers, and there are no strong formal traditions for community-based management or co-management. The role of communities, local knowledge and informal resource management systems has been generally ignored until recently. Coastal areas are characterized by the presence of diversified economic activities and groups of users with different voices. Their interests, needs and values might converge or conflict (Buckles 1999; Rijsberman 1999). Diversity exists not only in relation to different economic sectors but also in relation to groups that may be more heterogeneous than supposed, as in the case of many communities (McCay and Jentoft 1996).

Participatory approaches to coastal resource management must take into account relationships of power and ensure the empowerment of marginal stakeholders, whose living conditions are potentially affected by both global changes, such as trade liberalization, technological change, structural adjustment policies and environmental degradation, and local changes like the implementation of MPAs. The effects of these changes vary according to gender, race, ethnicity, age, class and geographic location, among other factors, presenting both threats and opportunities to the livelihoods of different groups (Antrobus 2000; Carr 2000). Gender relations in Caribbean communities like San Felipe cannot be completely understood without taking into account the influence of globalization processes that transform, among other things, access to and use of marine and coastal resources. The colonial period contributed to the development of multi-cultural societies in the Caribbean, and the region is now experiencing the redefinition of many identities and governance mechanisms. In these fairly young societies experimenting with rapid change and restructuring, local stakeholders' situations cannot be easily defined or fully understood.

San Felipe: A Fishing Community in Yucatan, Mexico

San Felipe is located on the Yucatan Peninsula in southeast Mexico. It is a small fishing port with 1,838 inhabitants (1,003 men and 835 women), located 195 kilometres from Mérida, the capital of Yucatan state. San Felipe has basic infrastructure, including paved roads, power, telephone and computers in the fishing cooperative and the municipal government headquarters. There are 527 households. The schools provide primary and secondary education, and those who want to continue their education must go to Mérida, Tizimin or Cancun. Forty-four percent of San Felipe's population know how to read and write, 21 percent finished primary school and 12 percent finished secondary school (Secretaría de Salubridad Pública 2000).

San Felipe has 621 artisanal fishers organized in the social sector (fisheries cooperatives) and the private sector. There are 207 boats, twenty-seven feet long, with outboard motors. The port's main fishing cooperative, United Fishermen of San Felipe, established in 1970, encompasses 218 active members and 109 seasonal fishermen. Three other groups, created in the 1990s, are called Social Solidarity Societies (SSS).² In March 2001, a new cooperative, Women Working at Sea, was created, with twenty-one active members dedicated to catching "crab" (the main shellfish used as bait for fishing octopus), shrimp and scale fish in smaller amounts.

In 2000, the volume of fish caught in San Felipe was over one million kilograms, over three-fourths of which consisted of octopus, grouper and lobster. Sea cucumber harvesting began in 2001 with growing demand in international markets, and the fishing cooperative was in charge of managing this new fishery. A crisis in the fishing industry in the last six years, caused by scarce marine resources, increased fishing effort and high costs for fishing supplies such as gasoline, oil and nets, has severely affected coastal households. The search for employment alternatives and future options is becoming increasingly urgent. As a result, young fishermen are moving to deeper waters primarily to fish for lobster. Others are investing in cattle, and parents, children and youth are turning to school and university as an alternative to fishing. Adults see aquaculture and eco-tourism as the most promising alternatives for the future. Women struggle with daily stress and a lack of natural and economic resources, but they are also initiating new forms of organization to be able to work and participate in fisheries and coastal management.

Gender Roles and Daily Life in San Felipe

Artisanal fishing is the main economic activity in San Felipe. Activities outside the household are related to the use of, and access to, natural resources. These include: gathering various snail species ("crab" is used mainly during the octopus season); fishing for shrimp (when ecological conditions are suitable and when administrative and legal rules permit); fishing with bait in the estuary and open sea; and gathering logs and wood. Other occupations include self-employment activities such as selling pickles and fried fish and domestic service.

Fishing is considered a male activity. Women's work in all phases of fishing, paid or not, in or out of the household, is seen as an extension of domesticity. As a result, it is less visible, valued and recognized in the community than men's work, even by the women themselves. When we asked San Felipe's women about their work they generally responded: "Nothing, staying at home." To "be at home" means to carry out daily activities such as cleaning, cooking, washing, carrying water, caring for children and processing fish. When we asked fishermen about what San Felipe women did, their answers were mainly, "They are housekeepers,"

leaving us to surmise that this activity lacks importance or that this is the “natural place” for women.

Young students share the perception that women are not accessing the marine ecosystem, or, to a great degree, the estuary ecosystem. Among students, 67.4 percent stated that their fathers fished for lobster, 76.1 percent octopus, 70.7 percent for grouper, and 28.3 percent stated their fathers took part in shark fishing. These replies clearly show the importance to the community of fishing. However, when asked about women’s engagement in these fishing activities, only 1.1 percent stated that their mothers were involved in grouper fishing. This suggests that San Felipe’s women do not use or access marine ecosystems and that they use or access the estuary or “river” and the inland area (“the woods”) to a minor degree. However, activities in which both parents participate include harvesting shrimp, snail, mussels and crab. These species are caught in the estuary or tributary of the river. Activities with the highest participation by both parents include childcare, cooking, shrimp peeling and carrying water.

A closer look at women’s activities shows that, in the household, diverse activities are carried out, including the processing and sale of marine species. In addition, in San Felipe, women play an active role in the use of coastal marine resources. For example, they are the main suppliers of shellfish bait for fishing octopus (the largest species by volume in the port’s catch). Although women do the physically demanding work associated with supplying the bait, the work is not valued by the fishermen. Women catch the bait during the octopus fishing season, August to December, averaging three hundred kilograms of bait per night. Their productivity varies according to their skill and physical condition, such as whether they are pregnant. Their working conditions sometimes result in deleterious effects on their health, for example, weight loss, prolonged periods of insomnia and lack of appetite due to frequent nighttime excursions into the estuary. According to the president of the women’s cooperative, women supply 95 percent of the bait used in fishing, and, “If at three or four in the morning women have not caught the bait due to strong winds, fishermen simply will not go to catch octopus.” November and December are known as the “north months,” due to the strong winds and cold fronts affecting the region. During these months, demand for shellfish is high due to the approaching end of the fishing season. In relation to these “hard” months, the cooperative president said, “Fishermen prefer that women be in charge of catching bait for convenience and because they do it every year.” She added: “Not a single man tolerates this work. It is especially hard because, apart from our household obligations, we have to go to sea.”

Regardless of the tides and strong winds, women go to the estuary and wet areas to catch shellfish to supply the fishermen (including those from neighbouring ports), who often do not pay the price they ask and may force them to wait up to six months for payment. Product for money and money

for product form a chain of discrimination in which relations of power and hierarchy shift the balance in favour of the fishermen. The same can be said about other fisheries, like those for shrimp and scale fish, where women receive low prices for their catches, especially when illegal catching practices have been used.

Most of the women see their work as a source of “support” for their husbands or households. They state that the income from their catch helps the husband with household expenses such as clothing and shoes, children’s education outside the community and fishing supplies when these are required. Income from catching and selling shellfish or other marine species is destined mainly to cover these types of basic needs. For men, women and youth, fishing determines the community’s socio-cultural and economic life.

The Women Working at Sea Cooperative

In March 2001, the cooperative Women Working at Sea³ was legally established. Its activities dated from ten years earlier, but lack of economic resources and information about organization delayed its formal establishment. The starting point for the cooperative was a group of five women who “since childhood wanted to go to sea.” When they were young, they were scolded by their fathers who tried to stop them from going to the sea and river, because these were men’s work spaces. Caught between their parents’ rejection and their wish to get involved in these activities, this group grew up and combined household tasks with gathering shellfish and catching scale fish. They initially accompanied their brothers or other men who did not oppose their interest in this type of work.

During the 1980s, when commercial fishing expanded, women’s involvement in associated activities (like catching bait for octopus, one of the three most important fisheries) also increased. At this time, basic and luxury needs also increased, and the fishermen’s incomes were not large enough to meet household needs. Three of the more experienced women in the fishing industry began to consider the possibility of organizing to confront two types of problems: those based in the fishing industry, such as lack of recognition for their work, poor prices for shellfish and lack of involvement in activities related to surveillance of the marine reserve, tours or sport fishing; and those related to shortfalls between their husbands’ incomes and household needs.

Women asked for support from a representative of a political party who visited the town during the 2000 election campaign. The local fishing cooperative gave them 500 pesos (US\$50) to pay the legal expenses of forming a cooperative. Most (85 percent) of the women in the cooperative have husbands associated with the fishing cooperative. Other economic support was obtained with much effort from the women themselves. The women are thirty-five years old, on average, and have an average of eight

years of education (primary and secondary school). Some are widows or have been abandoned by their spouses.

The community was astonished by the formation of the women's cooperative. Fishermen in general, and members of the fishing cooperative in particular, saw it as a threat to the stability of their households, a rival for space and power and a possible competitor for projects submitted to national and international financial institutions. The fishermen refused to buy shellfish (crab) from the women in the cooperative, despite the fact that the octopus season was starting. They also demanded that the women give up catching shellfish, because they had not yet obtained a permit from the fisheries ministry. Some blocked or followed the women who entered the estuary and sea to catch shellfish.

At present, the women have moved some way towards recognition of their cooperative. However, they lack technological support (no motorized boats, only small canoes with paddles), sources of credit and access to markets outside the community. This means they are dependent on the local fishing cooperative, brokers and local merchants. Following discussions with representatives of the fishing cooperative and the municipal president, in which they demanded better rights and treatment, the women pursued short-term strategies—selling their products to fishermen in other communities, engaging in illegal harvesting due to their lack of permits and catching other shellfish species for octopus fishing—but they did not pursue long-term strategies in the form of negotiations for gender equity. To improve their working and living conditions, they will need to promote themselves as a political force, capable of negotiating and making alliances with other fishing cooperatives in the community. They could begin in their own households by making their husbands and children aware of gender equity, especially since many of them are members of the fishing cooperative or will be in the future. They also need to increase their involvement in governance and fisheries management.

San Felipe's Marine Protected Area

In response to the fishing industry crisis and the related search for options and alternatives to permit them to continue working at sea, a group of experienced fishermen decided in 1995 to close an area of the sea 5.5 kilometres away from the port. The MPA extends along 10.2 kilometres of the coast and is 2.2 kilometres wide (not including the terrestrial portion). The area is referred to as a “natural breeding area,” and the objective was to preserve it for “bad fishing times.” The species that breed there are lobster, cod, barracuda, red snapper and grouper. The decision to close this marine area was spurred by indiscriminate exploitation and intensive diving. The local fishing cooperative made the decision and gradually involved the community.

The municipal government and local economic and social organiza-

tions⁴ are the main actors in decisions about management and implementation. Three municipal decrees, in 1995, 1997 and 1999, signed by the fishing cooperative and these organizations, ensured the existence of the marine reserve. The decrees ensured the continuity of the MPA, taking into account the community and fishermen of neighbouring ports. The MPA is patrolled by a group of fishermen from the cooperative, with support from the United Nations Small Subsidy Program for Development and from the Mexican Fund for Nature Conservation. With funds from these organizations, they purchased a motorboat, paid salaries to patrolling fishermen and prepared the Maritime Refuge Programmatic Plan *Actam Chuleb* issued in 1998 (Chuenpagdee et al. 2002; Fraga et al. 2001). The central government does not recognize this local initiative.⁵

The MPA functions as a closed area, with hook and line (*cimbra*) for barracuda species up to thirty kilograms being the only permitted fishing activity. Neither diving nor fishing with nets is allowed. A person who breaks the law will be fined 5,000 pesos (US\$500) for the first offence, and for the second his boat and fishing gear will be seized. These rules were discussed and accepted by fishermen in local cooperative meetings. Fishermen not associated with the cooperative are also obliged to follow the rules, because these are community agreements discussed by the “Live Forces” of the port, and they have been issued and signed by its representatives.

San Felipe's MPA and Gender Relations

In San Felipe, knowledge of the marine protected area is widespread in the community and thus among the women (81 percent). Women's responses were similar to those of the fishermen and general informants when asked about the creation of the marine reserve, its benefits and the value of keeping it closed to most fishing activities. Ninety-six percent of women surveyed stated that it was a good idea to have a marine reserve and that it should be maintained (Fraga et al. 2001). Gender differences in knowledge and opinions increased substantially, however, when participants were queried about the management, administration and control of the MPA. The community has accepted the centralization of management, administration and control of the MPA in the hands of two key actors: the fishing cooperative and the municipal government. Information related to management of the MPA flows towards other local actors in the community. Women are “naturally,” with some exceptions in bureaucratic positions (such as school directors), excluded from community organizations, particularly those related to agriculture, hunting and fishing. As a result, 98 percent of those who make up the key economic and social organizations in San Felipe are men. This explains why 93 percent of women said they had never been invited to meetings related to the MPA (Fraga et al. 2001).

Women users of the marine and coastal resources in the area of San

Felipe have less power over decision making than men. Although active users of coastal resources, these women, like their husbands and children, tend to see this use as an extension of their domestic work and as providing support for their husbands. The women have tried several strategies to help support their households and the community in light of the economic crisis and resource scarcity, but these have not included seeking a role in fisheries management. Thus, although the MPA is a local “community” initiative, key members of the community do not participate in decision making in relation to it.

Given this history and context, is equitable community-based co-management possible in relation to San Felipe’s fisheries and its MPA? The answer is a qualified yes. The women know of the existence of the MPA, they think the reserve a good idea, and they would like to participate in decisions related to it. This desire is particularly evident among the women associated with the women’s cooperative. Despite ongoing problems, women in San Felipe have already achieved a non-traditional community position through the establishment of their cooperative. They now have to fight for the right to participate on committees and in community organizations.

Conclusion

The case study of the San Felipe fisheries shows that gender-related hierarchies of authority and control over decision making exist at various levels. At the level of government, decisions from the central government prevail over the local authority. At the level of production, decisions by the local cooperative prevail over other productive organizations (for example, over those known as Social Solidarity Societies). At the level of social groups, decisions by fishermen prevail over decisions by those women who catch marine species. At the level of the law, formal and official legal decisions prevail over those associated with customary law.

Throughout the Caribbean, fisheries management and the power to create and sustain MPAs remain centralized in the state. The double role of the state (centralizing and paternalistic) in fisheries management extends to the community and to households. Laws do not grant positions of power and decision making equally to women and to men, with the result that new organizational forms tend to reinforce women’s marginalization.

Communities are networks of individuals distinguished by kinship relations, gender relations, status and ethnicity, using and managing natural resources in different ways depending on the relations of power and hierarchy that delimit the spaces available for interaction with nature and with extra-community networks and organizations.

Gender filters are mechanisms that transmit knowledge and daily practices, mediated by socio-cultural and symbolic processes, through which men and women determine how to use, access and control marine and coastal natural resources. These gender filters are inter-generational but not

eternal. On the contrary, they are dynamic and are mediated by such variables as religion, status and ethnicity. They can help us understand the spaces within communities and households and how they are reproduced.

In San Felipe's case, these gender filters are largely invisible barriers, sometimes unmoveable. Women, as a social category and as direct users of the marine and coastal resources, seem to have a predetermined status that prevents them from accessing certain levels of decision making and management of the resources. However, depending on their religion, marital and kinship relations, some may have more access than others.

In San Felipe's fisheries, women have no access to decision making because it is men's business and therefore the business of fishermen in the community. If community-based initiatives like the MPA are to promote equity rather than reproduce inequities, they must open up spaces for participation by a broader range of community groups. Related to this, the identification of women's work with domesticity needs to be re-evaluated at the level of households and within municipal, state, national and international government agencies. Gender relations in San Felipe are subject to constant change, due to the effects of globalization and the influence of global environmental initiatives related to conservation and sustainable use of natural coastal resources (Eder 1996). International development organizations are spreading these environmental messages and promoting co-management and community-based management regimes in Mexico and elsewhere.

In San Felipe, researchers have suggested that the community propose "official" recognition of the marine reserve by the state government through a signed agreement, since it is a state reserve. They have also suggested that the community form a committee with representatives from all user groups including women, fishermen who are not members of cooperatives, seniors and youth, among others. Future research should seek to recover women's knowledge of the management of natural resources as part of a general initiative to integrate local ecological knowledge into fisheries management and to train these groups in organization, environmental education and administration of the coastal zone.

Notes

1. The project was the responsibility of researchers Julia Fraga and Jorge Euan (Human Ecology and Sea Resources Department, Centre for Research and Advanced Studies, Mérida University), Ratana Chuenpagdee (Virginia Institute of Marine Science, U.S.) and Ricardo Torres (University of British Columbia, Canada). The program consists of two regional parties, the Caricom Fisheries Unit based in Belize and the International Institute of the Ocean in Costa Rica, with scientific advice of Laval University, Canada.
2. The SSS emerged as production organizations during the national government of Carlos Salinas (1989–1994) to promote social development in rural regions. In the fishing industry, these societies do not have rights of access to protected

species such as lobster and shrimp. They have fewer members, less infrastructure and less management capacity than do the federal fishing cooperatives. In San Felipe, two of these societies are engaged in tourism and a third in scale fishing and octopus fishing.

3. There were two options for the name of the cooperative: "Women Working at Sea" and "San Felipe's Fisher Women." The women chose the former name after an official of the state's fisheries department asked them in a meeting why they considered themselves fisherwomen, since the only fisherwomen he knew were a small group who engaged in open sea fishing from the port of Progreso, where deep sea fishing is carried out.
4. Community economic and social organizations include cattle growers, common land users, the harbour master's office, the federation of fishing cooperatives, the municipal president, the secondary school head and youth representatives.
5. The lack of recognition is partly due to the fact that, unbeknownst to local fishermen and other inhabitants of San Felipe, this area is part of the state ecological reserve. In addition, the central government rejects the "devolution of power and decision making" to direct users of the marine coastal resources.

The Power of Knowledge¹

P. Balan

In the tranquil village of Batu Kawan, the Penang Inshore Fishermen Welfare Association (PIFWA) brought together inshore fishermen, youth, children and women for a workshop on HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. PIFWA invited distinguished speakers from the State Health Department, the National Drug Agency and the Police Department to speak to the group on these two social issues. Even the woman representative from the state assembly of the area was present to lend her support to the workshop.

The workshop provided a good opportunity for fishermen and their families to learn more about these two issues. In some fishing villages the incidence of drug addiction among fishermen is quite high, and authorities conduct frequent raids to arrest drug traffickers and drug addicts. Wives and children are negatively affected when their husbands and fathers become involved in such activities. The workshop also strove to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS among the fishing community—women, youth and children. The possibility of contracting this deadly disease is real considering the use of injected drugs and the low level of education in the community.

Women—mostly wives of fishermen—contract HIV/AIDS as a consequence of the sexual escapades or drug habits of their men and are then shunned by society. It was definitely a turning point in PIFWA's activity when the women, with their husbands and children, came to learn about HIV/AIDS and drug abuse.

It is hoped that this workshop will be a turning point in their lives enabling them to take control of their health and their families. By giving these women the power of knowledge, it is hoped that they will be empowered to speak out against the negative activities taking place within their communities. It is well established that women in fishing villages have always had a strong family and community tradition. Their active involvement on any issue could certainly make a difference.

Note

1. This chapter was originally published in *Yemaya* 8, December 2001, a newsletter of the ICSF.

Global Trends in Norwegian Fish Processing

Gender and Total Quality Management

Marit Husmo

Processes of Modernization in a Gendered Fish Processing Industry

In the Norwegian fish processing industry, dependence on fluctuating fish resources and markets has created a dynamic industry characterized by workplaces that are increasingly industrialized. Despite this dynamism, women and men have always had separate jobs in this industry. In former times, women were seasonal workers. With industrialization, the jobs on the conveyor belt—cutting, packing and weighing the fish-fillets—became women’s jobs, while men kept their positions in management and at the quayside or got the new jobs operating machinery. Technological development gave women new opportunities, but the division of labour and rights favoured men (Bjørklund et al. 1994). Recruitment to management jobs in the Norwegian fish processing industry is also highly gendered (Husmo and Munk-Madsen 1994). Ninety-three percent of administrative directors, 72.5 percent of middle-level managers and 74.6 percent of supervisors are men (Husmo and Søvik 1995). The division of labour is based on the idea of gender-related characteristics that make men and women suitable for different tasks (Husmo and Munk-Madsen 1994).

The industry met several challenges during the 1990s, including new demands from customers and consumers. In 1991, new rules for the production of seafood came into effect with the establishment of the Internal Market of the European Union. As exporters of seafood to the European Union, the rules applied to the Norwegian industry (Robertsen 1993). Norwegian fisheries “experts” predicted that European Union customers would demand that their suppliers adopt “certified quality assurance systems” (quality systems approved by international standards such as ISO 9000). As a result, the fish processing industry was induced to develop and implement such systems. Total Quality Management (TQM) is one form of certified quality assurance system in which managers try to motivate quality behaviour in their employees and involve them in the process of developing and running the quality assurance system (Myhra 1991; Skyum and Dahlgaard 1988). The remainder of this chapter explores the gender dynamics associated with attempts to introduce TQM in Norwegian fish plants in the 1990s.

Gendered Organizations: An Analytical Approach

The introduction of TQM is a form of institutional change. Institutions are socially constructed conventions or norms (Røvik 1992) that guide our actions and are understood and followed within the organization as if they were rule-like facts (Zucker 1987). New institutions are either adopted as they are, or adjusted to suit existing institutions. However, new institutions sometimes become de-coupled from existing institutions in that they are pushed away from, or exist alongside, them (Brunsson et al. 1989).

The introduction of total quality management can be seen as an example of an institutionalization process, in which an organization is exposed to new institutions. Neo-institutional theory (the study of organizations and their environment) is a useful starting point for analyzing the implementation of the quality process in the Norwegian fish processing industry and its gendered consequences. However, the influence of power and interest in organizations, particularly gender-related power, has not been a central issue in neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell 1991), as opposed to the older institutionalism approach in which the exercise of power was an important aspect (Cyert and March 1963).

In feminist theory, gender is considered to be a fundamental feature of all social life, and power is at the forefront of any analysis. Feminist theory has made us aware of the existence of a gender stratification system within organizations based on the idea of a dichotomy between the sexes, in which the masculine is the norm, taking precedence over the feminine. The gender stratification system produces and maintains this dichotomy through gender-specific tasks, power and influence (Hirdmann 1988). This has consequences in the labour market and also within organizations, including the fish processing industry (Husmo and Munk-Madsen 1994).

Most organizational and management theories give the impression that organizations are gender-neutral. However, according to Acker (1990), what goes on in every organization is patterned by the distinction between woman and man, feminine and masculine. Gendering occurs by means of numerous interacting processes, including the division of resources along gender lines, the construction of symbols and images, and the interactions between humans of the same or with those of the other sex. These processes help to produce gendered components of individual identity. Gender is also implicated in the fundamental, ongoing process of creating and conceptualizing social structures. The norms that tell us what is suitable for women or men provide both sexes with opportunities, while also limiting these opportunities within organizations (Kvande and Rasmussen 1990).

Quality Assurance: The Norwegian Approach¹

In the early 1990s, quality assurance projects were established in the northern Norwegian fish processing industry. An employers' organization,

fisheries science institutions and public authorities provided the initiative for these projects. The Norwegian plants were motivated to participate in quality projects by experts in the industry who claimed that a quality assurance system would be a necessity for any firm wishing to compete in the European market of the future. A substantial amount of public funding also encouraged the firms to participate (Husmo 1995; Rånes 1995).

Total Quality Management, an approach to quality assurance developed in Japan to improve the quality of high-technology products, came to Norway by way of the U.S. and the European Union. The approach emphasizes the need for direct employee involvement in order to ensure the desired quality of products and services; thus, internal product control is built into the system itself. Total quality management requires that each participating firm establishes “problem-solving groups,” “quality circles” and “quality coordinators.” The problem-solving groups consist of employees from each division and are responsible for discovering faults and indicating areas for improvement. The quality circle, with representatives from all levels of the organization, is supposed to lead the quality process. The quality coordinator coordinates all the internal quality work. Management and employees receive experience-based training. The role of the business managers is central; through TQM, they are to motivate employees to make quality improvements (Myhra 1991). Key personnel are supposed to receive special quality management training (Husmo 1995).

For the most part, there was no explicit reference to gender in the total quality management documents used to implement TQM in Norway. In this sense, the approach was “gender neutral.” One exception was a project entitled “Women as quality managers in the fish processing industry,” initiated by a female advisor in the county employment office, the aim of which was to improve the recruitment of women as quality managers in the fish processing industry. This was to be done by improving women’s self-confidence and by network building. According to this document, the business manager’s attention was to be directed toward women’s potential as quality managers (Thomassen 1993).

There were three phases to the establishment of TQM in the Norwegian plants:²

- involving employees in the quality assurance process;
- developing plant-base quality assurance systems; and
- documenting the quality assurance system in the quality manual.

What follows is a description of developments associated with each of these phases in the different plants involved in the study.

Involving employees in the quality assurance process

The three largest plants organized problem-solving groups within each

division, as recommended by the project consultants; the smallest plant chose to organize them across divisions. All the plants held meetings and seminars, participated in fisheries exhibitions and held internal quality training courses for managers and employees to prepare for the quality assurance process. Several employees also received special quality training. During the first phase, the employees pointed to incorrect or faulty work practices and routines as the main quality problems. They linked these to lack of communication, poor cooperation and the absence of an overall quality system. They also pointed to shortcomings in machinery and buildings as behind quality problems. The managers, for their part, identified employee lack of commitment and responsibility as the main source of quality problems.

Much attention was directed to the female-dominated filleting division, where attention was called to physical faults in the production process. Participants made suggestions for adjusting the height of cutting and packing tables and similar ergonomic improvements, as well as suggestions for other physical improvements to the facilities. They also suggested that there be more cooperation between the quayside and filleting divisions. Workers in the filleting division called attention to what they considered to be the quayside workers' lack of knowledge of how the raw material should be treated. In their opinion, lack of knowledge and commitment on the quayside led to deterioration of the raw material, which in turn caused problems for the other divisions. Their proposed solution was better training for quay workers and fishermen delivering to the plants. In contrast, it was more difficult to get the quality process on track in the quayside division (Strand 1994). The quayside workers claimed that there was no need for quality changes in their division.

The quality consultants suggested that quality circles should have representatives from all the divisions in the plants, and two of the plants adopted this model. In one of them, the quality circle had a female controller from the filleting division, a male supervisor from the quayside division, the male quality coordinator and the male administrative director. In the other plant, the circle had three women—the supervisor and two cutters from the filleting division—and four men—the quality coordinator, two quay workers and the administrative director. A third plant chose to establish a management-dominated quality circle composed of the quality coordinator, the quality manager, the production manager, the technical manager, one of the top managers and the union leader, all of whom were men. The fourth plant did not establish a quality circle at all, instead giving the quality circle tasks to two existing committees in the plant—one composed of the female administrative manager and three or four female and male employees, and the other composed of the same administrative manager, the male administrative director, the male supervisor from the quay, a female controller from the filleting division, a female secretary and the union leader.

The quality circles were responsible for planning and coordinating the internal quality process, with the final goal being to produce a quality manual for the plant. The quality circles evaluated proposals coming from the problem-solving groups and selected from them. If a proposal implied major changes or investments, the administrative director made the final decision.

The role of the quality coordinator was to lead the internal process in the intervals between quality circle meetings. In the beginning, the quality circles held regular meetings, but as the process went on, it became harder to maintain this regularity. The coordinator was the quality circle's secretary and sometimes also the leader of the circle and, as the projects developed, this position became more central to the point that, eventually, most parts of the quality manuals were written by coordinators. In most cases, the quality circle was a co-player in the internal quality process, but in some cases, the coordinator alone did the work. In addition to previously mentioned formal quality training, coordinators also attended special seminars given by the quality consultants to improve their competence for leading the quality process. At these seminars, quality coordinators from all the plants met each other, swapped notes and discussed problems. Technical and physical aspects of the production process received the most attention and social relationships the least. This was also the case at the seminars held for business managers.

The business managers ignored the women's project, which was established in order to increase recruitment of female quality coordinators. The quality consultants claimed that it would be wrong to impose equal opportunity ideas on the participating firms and thus took a negative position on the initiative. Nonetheless, the women participating in this project reported that they benefited from it.

A former male controller from the processing division was recruited as temporary quality coordinator in the largest firm. The other large firm first recruited a woman from the filleting division to a temporary position as coordinator, but when she went on maternity leave, replaced her with a man, this time in a permanent position. The coordinators in the two smallest firms were recruited on the basis of education, administrative competence and family connections. In one of these firms, a male administrative manager was recruited; in the other, the firm created a new position of quality manager within the administration for a female family member.

Gender-specific characteristics were used to justify the choice of quality coordinators (Husmo 1995; Strand 1994). The quality consultants claimed that women were especially suitable for the quality coordinator position because women adapt to change more easily and have valuable experience in care giving and working in voluntary organizations. Women's work experience within the production process was of some importance, and it gave them special insights into hygiene matters. The claim was that

such gender characteristics and experience would be relevant to quality improvement work. Men's work, on the other hand, gave them no such competence, and capacity to adapt to change was not seen as a male characteristic. When men were recruited to the quality coordinator position, their suitability was attributed to their experience as supervisors or controllers, not to their male characteristics (or possible female characteristics). This was implicit, however, rather than explicitly stated in project documents.

Developing plant-based quality assurance systems

After defining and correcting quality problems, the next step was to alter routines and procedures and record them in a system document, the quality manual. At this point, the problem-solving groups seem to have been dissolved, and from then on the project was largely in the hands of the coordinators and quality circles. According to both male and female employees, information sharing about the process came to a halt at this stage. Management stated that the involvement of employees in the project was over.

The new quality requirements had the largest impact in the filleting division, where new procedures for process control and hygiene improvement were introduced. The women in the filleting division had been active participants in the quality projects. Their participation in the problem solving-groups had provided an opportunity to put problems on the agenda, have their voices heard and achieve change. The women had also participated in the quality circles, in some plants as permanent representatives and in others by rotation. Strand (1994) noted that the men in the filleting division were more reserved in their contributions.

In the quayside division, the focus was mainly on hygiene and routines to meet the new demands for raw material treatment. It had been much harder to get the quay workers interested in the quality project. They questioned the effectiveness of new routines and procedures and claimed that these would only lead to bureaucratization of their jobs, forcing them to complete more forms. They saw the process as a nuisance, having more relevance in the processing divisions than on the quay. In some instances, the process met with strong resistance and attempts to evade or even stop it altogether (Strand 1994).

Developing the quality manual

The quality manuals, one for each plant, are divided into two parts, general and operative. The general part aims at informing employees and customers and includes the firm's business vision, quality goals, quality policy and decision making and organizational structures (Robertsen and Lorentzen 1991). The operative part of the manual documents the production processes, procedures and instructions for every job (Robertsen and Lorentzen 1991)

and has proven to be the most difficult to complete. It consists of three elements: fault prevention, fault discovery and fault correction.

The first element, fault prevention, involves the written documentation of every job in the plant, and it was partly successful. The second, fault discovery, was to be implemented by introducing computerized registration and control, beginning with the female-dominated filleting and processing divisions. The plants had already established control routines in these areas, but with computerized monitoring it was easier to continuously monitor faults and their perpetrators. The main intention, however, was to use the system to manage the daily production process, to locate and eventually correct faults, and to trace the causes of faults. If the introduction of these new control routines met with positive response at all, it was in the filleting and processing divisions (Husmo 1995; Rånes 1995; Strand 1994).

Once again, quality control routines were far more difficult to establish in the quayside division. The men in this area resisted the introduction of new work routines and control systems, believing that they were fully able to manage their work and that the new procedures just created difficulties. In some cases, the process was boycotted. New procedures were eventually written down, but workers in these divisions did not always adhere to them (Rånes 1995; Strand 1994).

The third element of the operative part of the quality manual was aimed at correcting faults and called for the establishment of a correction group. The original idea was that the established quality circles would take on this role, but since all of these except one had been dissolved, the job was generally given to quality coordinators. These coordinators found the task difficult, stating that although they had been given the responsibility for making corrections, they did not have the power or means to do this (Rånes 1995). The goals of this phase of the quality assurance system were the least likely to be accomplished.

The original goal of all the firms involved was to implement a *certified* quality assurance system. However, only one completed the third phase, while the others reduced their goal to producing a *documented* quality assurance system. The main motivation of the business managers for establishing quality assurance systems had been the need to meet expected demands from customers. They expected an additional gain in terms of greater employee competence. Substantial public funding was also a motivating factor. Some of the managers had also hoped to improve the general working environment through participation in these projects (Husmo 1995; Rånes 1995; Strand 1994).

The Gender-Blind Quality Ideal

The employers' organization, fisheries science institutions and public authorities and "quality experts" in the fishing industry functioned as what neo-institutional theory calls "authoritative centres" (Røvik 1992) in the

development of the quality assurance programs. Women are poorly represented in these groups, and they played only a minor role in the development of the model for quality assurance. Women were also barely represented among the quality consultants whose task it was to monitor and assist the process in the plants. The business managers made the decisions on the development and implementation of quality assurance in their own firms, and none of these firms had female business managers (women hold few top-level positions in the industry).

The division of resources along gender lines and its influence on how institutions are initially established and given meaning is fundamental to the gendering process in organizations (Acker 1990). This is well documented in studies of the division of labour, power and influence in organizations based on stereotyped gender expectations (Husmo 1995; Kvande and Rasmussen 1990; Moss-Kanter 1977). As with many projects that involve workplace organizations, as well as most academic theories and practical guides for managers that are supposedly gender neutral, the total quality management initiatives were actually gender-blind—in other words, blind to the gendered dynamics in the fish plants and their consequences (Acker 1990). With gender blindness, important knowledge and insights that might contribute to the success of projects or organizations are lost.

The program initiators did not see the lack of female involvement in the program's first phase as an issue. However, female participants might have contributed different experiences and perspectives to the process. The women's project tried to add women to the process, but this initiative can hardly be judged a success, since its commitment to encouraging women's involvement was not incorporated into the main project. The quality consultants perceived the women's project as an equal opportunity initiative and resisted it. Men's gender perspective, represented by male quality consultants, thus had more influence than women's, represented by female consultants at the regional labour office.

Contrary to the gender-neutral perspective expressed by the quality consultants, it is clear that the projects were characterized, to a great extent, by gender differentiation. It was mostly men in managerial roles who took part in the first phase of the process, in which the organizations were exposed to new institutions. Not only did these men model the quality ideology, but they also made the decision to introduce the new institutions into the organization. The new institutions encountered the organization through their eyes. Participation by women and men in the quality assurance process was evaluated using gender-based assumptions. Women were perceived to have certain qualities that made them suitable for such things as working with quality improvement, while men were ascribed opposite qualities.

The Dynamic Quality Assurance Firm

One of the tools used to ensure that the organizations could meet future external quality demands was employee involvement. The other was the development of “supportive tools” to help organization members in their quality improvement efforts. The employees were involved in the process through the problem-solving groups, and only at this level was women’s involvement noticeable. The problem-solving groups were not only organized by division but were also highly gender-segregated, often consisting of women or men only. There were noticeable differences in the level of acceptance of the process between different divisions, with the level of commitment much higher in the female-dominated filleting division than in the male-dominated quayside division.

The other channel for employee involvement was the quality circle, where the issues raised by the problem-solving groups were prioritized. In some of the firms, only division managers participated in the quality circles. Given the low number of female division managers in the industry, the quality circles were dominated by men, resulting in almost complete male dominance within the prioritizing process. Where the quality circles consisted of employees from different divisions, more women got involved, opening the door for women to exercise their competence as well.

The problem solving-groups and quality circles represented new arenas for cooperation inside the organizations. With them, the direction of communication became more horizontal and cross-divisional, giving employees more influence. The quality ideology contributed to a new view of employee participation in which the competence and involvement of employees were seen as important for the development and maintenance of the firms’ quality assurance systems. There is evidence that, at least during the project period, the firms began to show signs characteristic of dynamic structures—flexibility, teamwork, decentralized decision making, horizontal communication and influence based on knowledge and experience (Kvande and Rasmussen 1990).

Kvande and Rasmussen (1990) argue that women’s resources are better utilized in dynamic organizations than in static ones. To some extent, this appears to have been the case in these quality projects, as indicated by the high degree of female involvement. In the initial project phase, much of the attention was focused on the filleting division, resulting in high female participation early in the process. Women’s interest and contribution resulted in the perception of them as adaptive and positive towards change and development, which made them the primary focus of the quality consultants and management. In the fish plants studied, the male quality consultants and the female production workers began to collaborate. However, the interaction between the male quality consultants and the female workers was not based on equality, because it was the men who set the terms for cooperation, since they had the definitional power. The male

quality consultants decided what was to be included in the process and what was the right response to each issue.

Although the consultants considered the quality ideology to be gender-neutral, they appeared to have a fundamental belief in gender-based differences, resulting in their assumption that the women's commitment to the project—and to change—was based on gender-specific female qualities rather than on their position in the organizational structure. As a consequence, problems connected with women's monotonous work, limited career opportunities and lack of influence were not given priority.

The projects created a unique quality image that was instilled through seminars, meetings and excursions with employee participation. Quality assurance represented modernity, progress and adaptability. The ideology applauded knowledge of the treatment of food and the practical organization of daily life, as well as hygiene, accuracy, adaptability and the ability to communicate—qualities traditionally attributed to women in the Norwegian fish processing industry (Husmo and Munk-Madsen 1994). Thus, the quality image brought the women into the quality process based on the assumption of traditional female characteristics.

Myths regarding gender-specific abilities, found in many organizations (Collins et al. 1993; Husmo and Munk-Madsen 1994; Moss-Kanter 1977), were reinforced through the quality assurance projects. Quality assurance as a phenomenon became associated, to a large extent, with a feminine image. However, even though the women had a certain amount of influence in the process and were identified with the process through gendered assumptions, they did not have the power to define or redefine the quality image. The male quality consultants held onto the power to define this concept and its content.

People-Oriented Total Quality Management

The new type of management promoted in quality management theory is far from the traditional task-oriented leadership style practised in Norway's fish processing industry (Husmo 1993). The quality ideology promoted a people-oriented management style, which Loden (1987) considers to be a female management style. With the implementation of the quality assurance ideology, there was a temporary shift towards a more involved and people-oriented management approach. The idea was to involve the employees and get them to take on more responsibility, thereby making the whole organization work towards a common goal. The technical side of the system was supposed to aid in this process. However, as time went on, the technical side was given more and more weight, receiving the most attention in the firms and by management. Thus, quality improvement efforts were mostly aimed towards physical improvements. The contrast between this emphasis and the diagnosed problems, which were mostly issues of communication and cooperation, is striking. This development is not surprising, consider-

ing that the business managers' motivation for involving their firms in the quality process was not to use the new institutions as a means to increase efficiency, but rather to enhance their competitive position and comply with the law. The firms emphasized that part of the projects—the technical side—that fit into the existing organizational culture and structure. The quality assurance process itself rolled on, but it was given a more peripheral role.

In neo-institutional theory, this process of separating new institutions from the main activity is called de-coupling. Organizations consist of several institutions that do not necessarily fit with one another (Røvik 1992). If the new institutions do not fit into the existing structures and cultures, de-coupling may occur (Brunsson et al. 1989; Meyer and Rowan 1991). The new institutions are a veneer behind which established practice continues, unaffected (Røvik 1992). The people-oriented ideology does not appear to have been incorporated into quality management to any significant extent. The managers' people-oriented management style was only evident during the project period. As the projects progressed, the managers' commitment to this faded, and much of the responsibility for the process was left to the quality coordinators.

The firms established the position of quality coordinator to assist managers in developing and implementing the quality assurance system. At first, this was a temporary position, but the goal was to establish a new, permanent position of quality manager/coordinator in each firm. The quality coordinators were given formal quality management training, and they took part in informal quality coordinator seminars—as opposed to the business managers, who concentrated more on the technical than the human side. Both women and men were recruited for quality coordinator positions, and many of the coordinators were women, although the consultants and managers stressed that gender was irrelevant in their choice of people for these positions. Women were not specifically recruited, but the perception of what was suitable for men and women was easy to detect. The same arguments that were used to explain women's commitment to quality improvement were used to assert women's suitability for this job. Significantly, these are the same arguments that are used to explain women's inferior place elsewhere in the plant hierarchy.

In the four plants studied, three of the quality managers were men. Thus, men have not been excluded from quality positions by virtue of their lack of female gender characteristics. Instead, when men get these positions, their personal attributes, such as personal interests or experience, are used to explain the choice. The practical result is that women and men have been recruited into these positions at almost the same rate. This is unusual for a structure in which positions are largely distributed on the basis of mutually exclusive gender characteristics. Quality coordinators had responsibility for implementing and maintaining the quality assurance system, without the

power that this task required. As a consequence, quality management became just another position in the firm and not part of a new management style as envisaged in the total quality management concept.

Controlling Women, Controlling Men

A higher level of computer-based surveillance was the most visible result of the projects. These systems were easiest to implement in the filleting division. Why did the women accept and even accelerate computerized surveillance? One reason is that firms in this industry are organizations in which the gender stratification system results in women losing out in competition with men, in terms of jobs, managerial positions, influence and power. Another factor is that managerial control over fillet cutting has had a long tradition in the filleting division (Husmo 1995), and the quality assurance projects involved tightening of existing routines. A third part of the explanation may lie in the women's working conditions, which are worse than the men's in some important ways. Women's work is characterized by monotony and lack of communication or opportunities for cooperation (Husmo and Munk-Madsen 1994). The individual, bonus-based wage system leads to competition among the women and makes it more difficult for them to act collectively. The work situation encourages division as opposed to what Lysgaard (1964) calls an *arbeiderkollektiv*, or a group of workers who enforce their own norms.

The quality assurance process gave some women new tasks, greater challenges, new insight, increased competence and the opportunity to let their voices be heard and have influence over their working lives. They attained this by stressing and accepting the understanding of women's differences from men and by accepting the feminine quality image. The women were, to some degree, involved in creating the images of adaptive women and reactionary men, through discussions among themselves and with quality consultants and managers. Gender difference arguments led the women to accept and go along with what was imposed on them, becoming partners in the process of change. This strategy gave some women greater opportunities, which explains the women's positive commitment. In the process, women had some influence over how the new institutions were treated in the organization, even if, as a result of the gender stratification system, they did not have the same definitional power as the male quality consultants.

Why did the quality assurance process meet resistance from the male quayside workers? Compared with women's tasks, men's tasks in fish plants are more diverse and characterized by variation and cooperation. The men are usually paid hourly wages, resulting in a less competitive environment (Husmo and Munk-Madsen 1994). In this environment, an *arbeiderkollektiv* was activated when change threatened to worsen their working conditions.

The quality assurance project did not necessarily bring positive change

to the male workers. In this project, well-established information and influence channels that advantaged men were side-stepped (Husmo 1995), and the men's attitudes and work performance were criticized. This kind of criticism was not new; but now, external experts and management "threw their weight" behind it. Equally important were the consequences of the new instructions and procedures and control over compliance with them. In contrast with the women, the quay workers had not previously been subjected to individual monitoring (Husmo 1995). The work on the quay had a masculine image: it was technical, heavy, cold and dirty. That work came under scrutiny by the new quality roles that focused on hygiene, and the new institutions represented a threat to existing order and long-established rights, which the male workers moved to defend. Moreover, the quality assurance work had a feminine image. It was the men's position in the organization that was responsible for their reaction and resistance to the quality assurance process. To some extent, their strategy seems to have been successful, since the quality assurance system in the quayside division exists only in theory and was never properly implemented. It is worth noting that men have traditionally had different information channels and opportunities to exercise influence than women (Husmo 1993), through the male network in the organization.

A few men took an active part in the quality assurance process, and these men were recruited into the new quality coordinator positions. This happened despite the feminine image associated with the quality work and despite strong male resistance to the quality process. These men expressed a feeling of isolation and exclusion from the other men. Holter (1989) has found that relationships with other men are much more important for the development of male identities than relationships with women. The male quality coordinators compensated for their loss of male networks through their relationships with men in management and with the other quality consultants. Thus, their involvement in the quality assurance process, regarded by other men as women's work, had an impact on their individual identities. Some of the men emphasized the difference between themselves and the quay workers, attributing the latter's resistance to old men's fear of change and presenting themselves as modern, young men. Involvement in the quality assurance process gave these men new jobs and higher prestige than their ordinary work would have done, at least at the start of the process.

Cementing the Gender Stratification System

The quality assurance process in the fish processing industry did not lead to any major changes in organization and management. The new bodies that the process brought into being were not integrated into the organization as a whole, and the traditional, static structure—characterized by specialization and a rigid division of labour, vertical communication, centralized decision making and positional influence (Husmo 1993; Kvande and Rasmussen

1990) was largely sustained. Neo-institutional theory refers to this process as strategic adoption (DiMaggio 1988): a new organizational model is adopted for its strategic importance, not necessarily for its effectiveness, and, as a result, the new institutions are de-coupled from the existing structure. However, neo-institutional theory does not take into account the ways the outcomes of institutional change are shaped by gender relations and have different consequences for women and men.

Gender is implicated in the fundamental, ongoing process of creating and conceptualizing social structures (Acker 1990). It is a constitutive element in organizational logic—the underlying assumptions and practices that construct most contemporary work organizations. Thus, not surprisingly, gender was at work as a structuring principle in the quality assurance process. Although some women were given new opportunities during the project period, the overall result was to maintain existing structures. Women are as badly represented in managerial positions in firms with quality assurance systems as in those without (Husmo 1995). Organizations like these fish processing plants do not easily change their conception of who is suitable for what positions or how work ought to be carried out or assigned, because change may lead to loss of control. Hierarchy is the basis of control in these plants, and stability and predictability are central values that promote the control system. Organizations based on hierarchical control are known to give women few opportunities (Kvande and Rasmussen 1990). Thus, the quality assurance process cemented gender differences and largely upheld the gender stratification system.

Notes

1. This chapter uses a study of four Norwegian fish plants in northern Norway (Husmo 1995), as well as other studies of quality programs in the industry as a whole (Rånes 1995; Strand 1994) to document the gender dynamics of Norway's quality assurance programs. Data were collected using qualitative methods such as personal interviews and observation and, in some cases, participant observation in the workplace.
2. The examples used in this chapter are drawn largely from the quayside and filleting divisions—exclusively male and female divisions respectively.

We, women, are out there, fishing¹

Mildred Skinner

I am a crew member and a partner aboard of a thirty-eight-foot longliner. I also fish lobster with my husband from a twenty-two-foot open boat. Talk to any woman who fishes inshore for living, myself included, and they will tell you they are fishing out of necessity. When the fish stocks started to diminish twelve years ago, that's when we women started to fish in our area. It just made sense financially for me to go fishing with my husband. It meant we could still make a living from the fishery, but now we have two shares coming to one household.

We were always part of our husbands' enterprises, but we weren't seen. Earlier, we took care of banking and picked up groceries and other supplies for the vessels. We were the communication link to the Canadian government's Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), the union, fish buyers and other government agencies. Without our work, our husbands' enterprises wouldn't have thrived as well as they did. All of this was unpaid labour.

Now we are crew members. Most of us are getting fair wages for our work or receiving the same wages as other crew members on vessels. But we still have women out there in those fishing boats who are not getting paid or are getting what their husbands see fit to give them as a share. If fishing women in my area were asked, they would tell you that if another job became available, they would grab it in a second.

Most working women are stressed. Their stresses relate to childcare, work performance and workplace issues. But for a fishing woman, these issues take on an entirely different dimension. Our work starts at three or four in the morning and ends at seven or eight at night. For those of us who need it, it is very difficult to find adequate childcare because of the long hours involved. If there are older children, they have to take on more responsibility. One woman told me she got lucky last year because she found a good sitter. For the first time in ten years, she could fish and not have to feel guilty, for someone was taking care of her children.

Since we are seasonal workers, dealing with the Employment Insurance (EI) system has always been a nightmare. But, when you have to hire a caregiver for your children and work with this system, then you are dealing with a bigger nightmare.

I know one woman who was caring for her daughter's child this year. She is the grandmother and was doing this because the daughter is attending Memorial University. So, the time came for the grandmother to go fishing

this year, and she hired another daughter to care for the child. She contacted all the right people in the government, and they told her the exact deductions to take out of this daughter's cheques to pay for her EI premiums. She did it all right. Everything was fine and when the baby sitter/daughter filed for EI, she was approved and started to receive benefits. Meanwhile, her file came up at Revenue Canada. They are now reviewing her case. The reason? They think she was paid for too many hours. This should be a nine-to-five job, they think. They said: "You are not out there fishing for twelve hours a day. That's not possible." Somebody has to convince someone at Revenue Canada that fishing is not a nine-to-five job. I am sure there are a hundred stories like this one out there.

One woman told me this year: "Mildred, I've aged. Since I started fishing I have aged because of the stress, the stress of feeling guilty. I feel guilty when I am out fishing because of the time I spend away from my family. If I take the day off, I feel guilty because my husband has to fish alone. If I am not aboard the boat that day and my husband comes to the wharf, I feel guilty when people think I'm not fishing and could think that I don't deserve my EI next winter. The chances are that someone will call the government and report that I wasn't in the fishing boat that day."

As women fish harvesters, we find that there is a stigma attached to us. People outside the fisheries see us as using the system. Some do. But for those of us who are legitimate fish harvesters, we constantly have to prove we are more than just fishing on paper. Most men think we shouldn't be on the fishing boat, to start with. One of the women on board a boat told me that her husband feels guilty. He doesn't feel right when other men see his wife aboard the boat. Other men tell him: "You know, you are going to ruin her aboard of the boat; it's not good for her to be doing that. You shouldn't have her there to start with."

We find that women have very little voice in decision making. Not many of us sit on an advisory board or fishermen's committee. We've no outlet, and most of us have gotten lost and feel overlooked, even within our own local union committee. Our women's committee at the FFAW is working hard to change this. I find all of the meetings that I attend are for fishermen, and there are not many women who come to those meetings.

I remember last year we had one man in our meeting, and he was giving me a rough time about paying union dues. He said: "Most people get to pay Can\$150 and I have to pay Can\$300 a year." I said: "Why would you have to pay \$300 a year?" He replied: "I pay \$150 for me and a \$150 for my wife." And I said: "But isn't your wife aboard of the boat fishing as well?" He said, "Yes." And I said: "But of course she pays her *own* union dues." But he could not understand that. In his mind, he was paying the dues for his wife. Even though she was aboard the boat doing as much work as he was doing, she really wasn't there in his mind.

On the south coast of Newfoundland, as well as in other areas, vessels

are being forced further offshore. A lot of these vessels are not big enough to travel such long distances. Our boat went out to the Laurentian Channel this year, 110 miles from shore. The seas are very, very rough. It scares me when I think of the potential for disaster. If there is a disaster, it won't be like it was in the past when fathers and sons drowned and mothers and wives were left. Now, mothers and wives would drown as well.

Another major problem I see is inadequate health care protection. Very few, if any, of us are paying into a medical plan. We know women who are developing ailments—back problems, joint problems, kidney infections...the list goes on. One thing I am really proud about is that our union is now in the process of bringing a medical program to our membership for approval. This would be a tremendous help for us.

I am very proud to be part of our union. Somehow, we need to encourage women to get involved in issues that affect them. We are working to achieve that. We women fish harvesters are out there and our numbers are increasing every year.

Note

1. This chapter originally appeared in *Yemaya*, Special Issue, August 2000, a newsletter of the ICFS.

A Sea of Women

Gender-Informed Health and Safety Policies and Chile's Women Fish Processing Workers

Estrella Díaz

In the past two decades, Chile has been a leader among Latin American countries in expanding its presence in international markets. Production for export has boosted the country's economic growth and transformed its labour market. It has also highlighted the need for changes to labour and other policies, not just to enhance the fit between local industry and the requirements of international markets, but also to ensure that the risks of internationalization are minimized and the benefits equitably shared.

As yet, the need to develop new labour standards has not received much attention in Chile, but it will in the near future. Labour standards are addressed in the social clauses of various economic integration agreements that Chile has signed, or will soon sign, with countries and commercial entities (for example, the 1997 Chile-Canada Agreement). These agreements regulate transactions of goods and services, but they also aim to achieve a wider integration of social, environmental, cultural, policing and migration policies. Developed countries want labour standards addressed in such agreements because of the fear that their products will face competition from developing countries where the absence, or poor enforcement, of labour standards contributes to a comparative advantage of cheap labour. This kind of competition is known as "social dumping." Among the commonly discussed standards are minimum salaries, child labour, occupational health and safety, freedom of association, collective bargaining, layoff conditions and the prohibition of gender and race discrimination.

Workplace health and hygiene have strategic political and economic importance for Chile, particularly in export sectors. Those sectors where commercial agreements have proliferated with globalization¹ tend to have high levels of surveillance and regulation in the areas of quality control and hygiene. International standards for quality control and hygiene are having a strong influence on work environments, working conditions and risks to occupational health in export sectors. Less progress has been made within these agreements in the areas of improved labour standards and safe working environments. In addition, commercial agreements do not require workers, management and government to develop agreements related to working conditions, wages and the like.

Fish processing is one of the most successful of Chile's industries in

terms of the foreign currency generated from exports. As the basis for effective policies related to labour standards and workplace health and safety in fish processing, we need to document the risks that workers face, along with their accident and injury rates. If such policies are to benefit women and men workers equally, both the research and the policies it informs need to incorporate a gender lens.

This chapter summarizes findings from a study of hygiene and safety conditions in Chilean fish processing plants (Díaz 2000).² This was an exploratory, diagnostic study to document the need for gender-informed policies in fish processing, including policies to improve government procedures for inspecting occupational health risks and improving industrial hygiene. The study took place in fish plants in Chile's X Region (tenth region) of Los Lagos. As in many countries, a majority of the fish processing workers in this region are women, and there is a clear sexual division of labour in the industry. This points to the importance of using gender-based analysis when developing policies related to fish and shellfish processing.

Applying a Gender-Based Analysis

Gender-based analysis evaluates the different effects of policies, programs and legislation—proposed or existing—on men and women. It requires policy development to take into account gender differences and the nature of relationships between men and women, as well as their different social realities, expectations and economic circumstances. It is a tool for understanding social processes and responding with equitable and informed options. The focus is not just on results but also on concepts, arguments and the language used to justify a policy. Gender-based analysis needs to be part of the review and development of local, regional and national occupational health policies. In the context of globalization, it needs to be a part of the implementation and evaluation of international corporate and trade-related policies affecting health in export-dependent sectors like fish processing.

The major groups of risk factors influencing worker health are all gender-related. They include: the nature of tasks and the work environment in women's and men's jobs; workers' individual susceptibility due to biological and psychological characteristics; and external factors, which for women are household and child-rearing work. Gender-based analysis is necessary for developing policies that contribute to sustainable social planning and increased equity. It enables us to visualize the different working conditions experienced by men and women and the different occupational health risks they confront. These differences are the result of both sex-related physical differences and the gender division of labour at work and at home.

Many countries are incorporating gender analysis into health research, policy and programs. For example, researchers at Columbia University (Shelton 1997) followed a population of men and women over a fifteen-year period and found evidence of the relevance of considering the biological and

psychological aspects of men and women separately to understand the impacts of endogenous and exogenous factors on their health. In 1999, the European Union supported an initiative to highlight the health problems that affect only women or that affect women differently from men, identifying the need for preventive health measures designed specifically for women (European Union 1999). The EU noted that incorporating gender into all national health policies is a significant challenge, but that women's health is at risk for a number of unique reasons, including inferior standards of living, less job stability, higher levels of social exclusion, the higher percentage of single households headed by women, less coverage in social security, lower salaries, lower pensions and an unfair workload in the household. The EU has been urged to pressure its member states to make legal, policy and program changes to eliminate these inequities. There has been special emphasis on health and safety in female-dominated occupations and a call for more research on repetitive strain and back injuries among women.

The Chilean Fish Processing Sector

The X Region of southern Chile has the country's highest catches and landed volumes of fish and shellfish destined for human consumption. The largest group of workers in the country's fish and shellfish processing industry is also found in this region. In our study, we surveyed employer and worker representatives in a sample of twenty-three of these processing plants, representing about 20 percent of the total number of plants. The plants are involved in fresh-chilling, freezing and/or pickling of fish and shellfish, and most direct their product to export markets. Chilean investors own twenty (86.9 percent) of the twenty-three plants in the study. The companies generally exhibit a low degree of vertical integration, with only nine of them also owning fishing vessels or fish farms. The highest volume of raw material processed consists of farmed salmon (up to 20,000 tons annually in some plants), and the second highest volume consists of shellfish such as mussels, razor clams and clams.

Thirteen of the plants in the study export all of their products, while most of the others divide their sales between national and international markets, with the latter taking the largest share. Only two plants sell all of their products in Chile. The main export destinations are the U.S, Europe and Japan. In order to access the most important and demanding international markets, the plants had to achieve an export qualification standard through participation in a quality assurance program. Although participation was voluntary, the program guaranteed acceptance in the destination markets, so most of the plants participated.

Most of the plants in the study have more than a hundred workers. Ten of the plants (43.5 percent) are unionized, but even some of the large ones are not. The unionized plants generally have contracts or collective agreements in place that deal with working conditions and remuneration.

More than 50 percent of the workers in the study plants are women, and women make up more than 70 percent of workers in some types of jobs. The majority of industrial fish processing workers in Chile are women, and the sexual division of labour in the industry means that women tend to work with women and men with men.

Workers in the plants we studied are usually hired directly by the plants, without intermediaries, and on indefinite contracts. This is the case with all of the different types of plants, regardless of size and type of processing. However, there are also seasonal, contractual workers whose numbers increase during times of higher raw material volume, greater market demand or changes in product requirements. The plants generally limit the training of their workers to specific aspects of the production process. In exceptional situations, they offer special courses prepared by external organizations.

The plants operate six days a week, usually with eight-hour shifts. In one-third of them, overtime is routine. More than half of them, particularly the biggest ones, operate on a twenty-four-hour basis, with three shifts per day. Shifts rotate weekly or bi-weekly. The average wage is US\$220 per month (slightly higher in plants with more than three hundred workers). This is about 30 percent higher than Chile's minimum wage of US\$150 per month. Most of the plants pay a combination of fixed wages and bonus or incentive payments. The fixed portion amounts to an average of 72 percent of the total salary. As will be seen, reliance on bonus payments for more than a quarter of their monthly income has an impact on the health of workers, who find themselves under excessive pressure, individually and collectively, to achieve their salary goals.

During the study period, the accident rate in the region's fish processing sector was high, at 10 to 15 percent, although the overall trend is downward. The most commonly reported accidents are falls, blows, cuts, punctures and (less frequently) mild food poisoning and ice-burns. Slippery floors and incorrect movements by the workers contribute to falls. Insufficient space between workstations and aisles restricts movement and causes workers to bump into trays, ice and other objects, contributing to the frequency of blows. Cuts result from sharp or defective knives, sharp cans, defective gloves or the lack of gloves, as well as improper actions by workers. Punctures are generally associated with bone, skewer and shell handling. In the case of women, major or severe accidents that disable the worker for at least thirty days or lead to permanent disability are associated with multiple bruises caused by falls and fractures.

The Women Plant Workers

The female fish and shellfish processing labour force (Table 3) consists primarily of young to middle-aged women, many with family responsibilities. Slightly more than half of the women in our study were married, separated or widowed, and almost half were household heads (more than

twice the national average of 24 percent). The average number of children was two. The women's working hours were generally longer than the legal maximum of forty-eight hours per week. They performed repetitive manual work that was sequential and time-pressured. Seventy-one percent of them had basic education. Their work assignments were determined primarily by years of experience, and these women had worked an average of 4.1 years.

Production jobs are segregated by gender, but the specific tasks done by women vary according to the production process in different plants. The main activities carried out by women in fresh-chilling and fresh fish freezing processes are, in order of priority, de-boning, washing raw material, sorting, moulding, filleting, packaging and removing viscera. On the pickling line, women are involved in washing raw material, de-shelling, bottling, sorting, packaging, moulding and labelling. In contrast, on the fresh-chilling and freezing lines, more men than women work at loading, filleting and removing viscera. On the pickling line, they predominate in loading, cooking, stamping the seals and receiving. Table 4 indicates the extent to which some tasks are feminized, based on data from our study:

In general, women are assigned particular tasks to do on an ongoing basis, although there is occasional rotation to other tasks or to other women's jobs on the production line. Most women's jobs involve a sequence of tasks. For example, the woman who eviscerates also washes the fish, classifies it, weighs and measures it, and then puts it on a conveyor belt or hangs it up for another female or male worker to continue the process. An exception is the job of de-boning: these women workers tend to do only this task without rotation. Some plants are more mechanized than others, and where there is less mechanization, women perform their tasks with a series of specified manual operations using simple tools such as knives, pliers and scissors.

Women's jobs do not require high levels of formal qualification or training. Manual skill and work experience are more highly valued than formal education or qualifications in the hiring process. Hiring is also influenced by gender stereotypes. In almost 50 percent of the plants we studied, management acknowledged having gender-based preferential hiring criteria. They associated women workers with such culturally based gender stereotypes as manual dexterity, meticulousness, hygiene, speed, endurance, responsibility and patience.

Our study used a questionnaire survey of workers and employers, supplemented with observation of the plants, to examine the health and safety problems and risks in fish and shellfish processing. No ergonomic assessments or other methods were used to corroborate these findings. The most frequent symptoms and health problems reported by the women were grouped and diagnosed. Some were clearly work-related and linked to occupational risks. Others may have been triggered or exacerbated by work, but their causes and consequences were linked with lives outside of work as well.

 Table 3 Socio-Demographic and Occupational

Characteristics of Female Plant Workers

Age of youngest worker	19
Age of oldest worker	49
Percentage married	51.4
Percentage single	43.3
Percentage separated	4.3
Percentage widows	1.0
Percentage household heads	49.2
Average number of children	2.05
Percentage with basic education	71.0
Percentage with secondary education	29.0
Average years of working experience	4.1
Percentage trained before employment	7.0

 Source: Díaz (2000)

 Table 4 Percentage of Female Workers by Task

Work Task	Percentage Female (%)
Bottling	100.0
De-boning	95.0
Labelling	95.0
Sorting and measuring	86.5
Washing raw material	85.0
Moulding	79.6
Packaging	61.0
De-shelling	56.5
Trimming	56.1
Removing viscera	42.3
Filleting	25.6
Cooking	20.0

 Source: Díaz (2000)

Women's Occupational Health Symptoms

The recurring health symptoms reported by the workers, ranked in order of frequency, were headache, mental fatigue, physical fatigue, bone pain, hand pain, visual fatigue, back pain, sore feet or legs and stomach pain. Other symptoms mentioned less frequently were hearing discomfort, neck pain, kidney pain and anxiety.

Two work-related conditions that particularly affect women are lumbago and tendon inflammation. Lumbago is a very common musculo-skeletal problem in fish plants, linked to the awkward body positions that workers must assume for many hours, as well as to other factors in the organization of work. Symptoms are varied but include back, shoulder and neck pain. Tendon inflammation is one of the more worrisome occupational health problems for both companies and health care institutions alike. It includes tendonitis and tenosinovitis, both caused by excessive use of the upper extremities combined with intensive effort or repetitive movements (as in tasks such as de-boning). The result is inflammation of the tendons and pain in the affected area that increases with tendon movements. Symptoms include edema (swelling), heat and erythema (swelling) linked to hand, elbow or shoulder pain. Return to work can be difficult for workers affected by these conditions, as they often become chronic, and there are few plant-related jobs where workers can be placed to reduce the risk of relapse.

The workers in our study also reported health problems that were only partially work-related. Those most frequently reported were respiratory problems (colds, tonsillitis, bronchitis), chilblains, otitis (earache), allergies, hand or foot fungus and cystitis. Although none of these is classified as an occupational illness, the environment in which these women work, characterized by cold and humidity, is probably a contributing factor.

Women's Occupational Health Risks

Having identified the most important health problems, we examined risks to health and safety as reported in the questionnaires and by our own observations in the plants. These are classified into five categories: physical effort; physical environment; environmental contaminants; mental and psycho-social burdens; and safety and technological factors (Neffa 1988; Noriega 1989). What follows is a description of each kind of risk and how it manifests in the plants we studied, paying particular attention to physical effort.

Physical effort

There are two kinds of physical effort: static and dynamic. A task involves static effort when muscle contraction is constant over a period of time. Static effort is expended in the body postures of standing and sitting combined with sustained lifting of heavy objects. Dynamic effort occurs

when the muscles are alternately tensed and relaxed, as in lifting or transporting loads and shifting them horizontally or vertically. Women's and men's fish processing jobs usually demand both types of effort during a working day. However, in some jobs, one prevails over the other.

In terms of static effort, fish plant workers mainly perform their tasks standing up, and their work involves leaning over and extending their arms towards the front for more than fifty-five minutes out of every hour. The main consequences of working upright for long periods are leg congestion, edema and varicose veins, and the consequences of standing and leaning are spine deviation and even disk hernia. Working seated on unsuitable chairs or stools obliges workers to adopt uncomfortable and forced postures as they try to achieve a better working position. Rest periods are recommended for static work. In almost all of the plants studied, there were regulated rest periods, the main one being the daily 60-minute meal break.

Dynamic effort includes tasks in which the workers lift, lower and carry loads. In the plants we studied that required lifting or lowering trays of raw material, the women workers lift an average of seven trays per hour with an average weight of twenty kilograms, depositing them at a height of one to one-and-a-half metres above floor level. In the case of tasks involving the carrying of loads, the most common task requires workers to horizontally shift trays of raw material weighing about eighteen kilograms. Workers transport about three trays per hour, walking about twenty-five metres with a full tray and returning the same distance with no weight. Vertical shifting of trays up staircases and sloping platforms occurs ten times per hour with an average tray weight of 14.5 kilograms, and it involves walking one metre with uneven loads and returning.

Dynamic effort also includes tasks requiring gestures and rapid movements. Tasks that involve repetitive rather than intermittent actions demand this type of effort. A repetitive task is one in which well-specified operations, more or less numerous, are repeated regularly and frequently. The repetition is linked to a work cycle of definite duration in which the same operation recurs continuously. Dynamic effort and repetitive tasks can result in hardening and inflammation of the muscles at the point of inflection.

In our study, the positions dominated by women workers were classified as repetitive in 91 percent of the job categories we studied. The duration of a task cycle—from the beginning of the activity until the same task is repeated—lasted an average of forty-three seconds. We also reviewed the intensity of effort required of hand and arm muscles for the performance of a task. We asked the workers to classify this intensity of effort as light, medium or heavy according to their own perceptions. They most commonly identified low and medium intensity of effort for hands, and medium and heavy intensity for arms.

Frequent short breaks can reduce the physical impact of sustained

dynamic effort. In our study, only three of the twenty-three plants had five-minute breaks with compensatory exercises, twice a day during the work shift, with the goal of allowing workers to recover from the intense efforts expended in performing the work.

Physical environment

The air temperature in fish plants, dictated by the perishable nature of the raw material, ranges from five to fifteen degrees Celsius. Workers use cold water and handle cold materials regularly. In many plants, there are no special floors, grills, platforms or other means of insulating workers against cold and humidity. Rubber boots, aprons and gloves are the chief means of protection from cold and damp, and their quality almost never meets certified standards. Where equipment is suitable for clean handling of the product and for protection of the worker against humidity, dirt or cuts, it may not provide enough protection against the cold. Thus, for the workers, safe handling of cold materials depends on the temperature of these and the frequency and duration of contact. Lighting can affect worker health and safety, but it is also essential for fast and accurate work. Most of the processing tasks involve fine perception and manual precision. For example, de-boning requires workers to be meticulous in handling small items and observing details. However, few workers complained about lighting. Work space is another important health and safety factor. This includes adequate space for circulation (aisles where workers move to perform their tasks) and the relationship between the size of worktables and the space required to work. Our study identified crowded work environments in the plants. In many cases, a work space designed for a specific number of workers had more than twice that number when new production lines or new personnel were brought in at peak production times.

Environmental contaminants

Excessive noise in the work environment forces workers to perform their tasks with extra effort in order to isolate themselves from disturbance. This effort can reduce their attention and contribute to nervous exhaustion and fatigue, causing deterioration in the performance of tasks requiring concentration, agility and speed. In the fish plants we studied, noise emerged as a major environmental risk factor. Most of the women work in areas with permanent, temporary or occasional background noise. The main sources of noise are machines, followed by music and conveyor belts. Permanent background noise levels are higher in the pickling plants and higher on the pickling lines than on other lines. Less than 20 percent of the workers wear ear protection, which consists only of cotton or rubber earplugs. Workers were also found to be exposed to other environmental contaminants such as vibration, chemical substances, gases and steam. However, they did not identify these as major problems.

Mental and psycho-social burdens

Mental effort varies with the level of task requirements and the capacity of the worker to perform the task. Workload depends not only on the characteristics of the task itself, but also on external factors such as individual or socio-cultural characteristics and the nature of the working environment. As noted earlier, most women's jobs consist of a sequence of activities repeated in a particular order. Only in the smaller plants is a less specialized work process common. In most cases, the tasks are timed and must be completed within a specified period. Typically, the worker takes the material to be worked on from a conveyor belt or tray, performs the tasks and then puts it back on the same belt or in another place before the next piece reaches her. Anything that slows her down may constitute a disturbance. An assembly line is not just a piece of technology that permits the movement of materials from station to station. It also frames workers' activities, dictating the pace at which they must work. Every mistake or delay affects previous and subsequent tasks. The intensive requirements of sensory-motor activities that are repetitive and subject to a uniform rhythm and pace may have harmful consequences for the workers. In repetitive tasks, time pressure arises from their need to follow an imposed pace and to work within the requirements and restrictions of each task. It takes time for them to get into the rhythm and pace required. They may be able to achieve the level of performance demanded, but the price will be fatigue. Work pace is determined partly by supervisors, who decide how long tasks should take or when production goals must be reached, and partly by the fastest workers, who set the pace for the others. Since the level of automation in most of the women's jobs is minimal, other people almost always dictate the pace of the assembly line.

In most of the jobs, workers have to achieve daily production targets, and their capacity to do so influences their incomes. These targets and related incentive systems can exert substantial pressure on them, with the type of incentive system influencing the nature of this pressure. Where collective output partly determines salaries, pressure is mediated through the dynamics of the group of workers. Individualized incentive systems individualize the pressure. In most of the plants, respondents indicated that there were fairly cooperative relationships among the women working on the same line. However, a significant percentage stated that every person simply performed her own work. The price of either type of incentive system can be nervous exhaustion.

In plants producing for the export market, precise parameters have to be followed for the products, and workers have little autonomy in relation to the performance of tasks or the organization of work. Limited autonomy and a fixed work organization tend to produce monotonous work, which contributes to the mental burden experienced by workers. Despite the repetitive and monotonous nature of the work, the workers' level of

attention must remain high throughout the shift. Tasks involving a high level of visual and manual accuracy increase the level of attention needed. Respondents pointed to the high cost of the raw material and the risk of accidents as placing additional demands on their attention. The ability to converse during a shift can be an indication that a lower level of attention is required or that attention does not need to be constantly maintained. In the plants we studied, the women can only exchange a few words due to the demands associated with the work pace and quality requirements. Silence is imposed by a prohibition against talking and by the ever-present noise, especially in pickling plants.

Products for export markets (with their standardized, exacting quality requirements) require close attention and careful handling to avoid deterioration and to ensure acceptance in the market. This contributes to the mental effort associated with the jobs. On the other hand, in the majority of the plants we studied, the workers transform the raw material into valuable products through their skills and effort. A sense of accomplishment and contribution may have positive psycho-social impacts on these workers if they are rewarded by social recognition in the workplace and fair pay for their work.

Safety and technological factors

Our study found that the work infrastructure—buildings, walls and roofs, as well as tidiness and maintenance—was generally fairly good. However, in most plants, we identified problems with work station design—the adaptation of equipment, facilities and tools to the physiological and psychological characteristics of the worker, in order to provide for worker safety, comfort and health and to improve the operation of the production system. We also identified gaps in employee sanitation facilities, such as showers and changing rooms.

Women's Paid and Unpaid Work

Paid work and unpaid work, and the links between them, are important determinants of health for women. A worker's mental load depends on the level of demand created by tasks and workloads. But workloads are mediated not only by factors in the work environment itself, but also by circumstances external to it. For the women fish plant workers, these external circumstances are important in light of cultural practices associated with domestic labour and gender relations. In addition to plant work, women are responsible for household work and child-rearing. Respondents in our study estimated that they devote an average of twenty-five hours per week to these tasks, over and above the support they receive from female relatives, maids and, less frequently, spouses.

In households and communities, the gender division of labour allocates to women many routine, time-demanding and repetitive chores before and

after going to work, as well as on holidays and weekends.

Emotional work is another aspect of women's responsibilities at home. Also adding to their workload is the need to compensate for shortages in public services due to government cutbacks, along with reduced access to these services due to privatization and user fees. This kind of unpaid work must be seen as a second shift that can worsen or prolong the fatigue that women have accumulated in the workplace. Women who come home from work tired and anxious will have limited opportunities to recover at home. Health problems triggered in one context can be exacerbated by conditions in the other.

A Holistic Approach to Gender and Work

Traditionally, health and safety legislation and practices have concentrated on what is required in the workplace for safe and effective work. Employers are required by law to provide rest times, drinking water, bathroom facilities, lunch breaks and the like. But these regulatory frameworks do not usually incorporate family and household responsibilities and, as a result, women's double day of labour is ignored as a potential factor in their health and safety in the workplace. This is consistent with society's lack of recognition of these responsibilities.

The failure to recognize women's reproductive function may also have repercussions for their work and health. Micro-climates, contaminants and physical and mental workloads often have a different impact on pregnant women. Work stations, which in fish plants are uncomfortable for everyone, are particularly badly designed for pregnant women. The height of the work surface and the space in which they must work may force them to assume fixed postures that are highly inappropriate. While pregnancy is a temporary condition for the worker, it is a permanent characteristic of the workforce for industrial firms employing many women, and it is almost never accommodated.

A more holistic and gender-informed approach to the relationship between work and health would provide a better understanding of how the different conditions that men and women face at work affect their health. Women's occupational health issues are usually poorly understood, due to the gender division of labour and the marginalization of women from decisions about what constitutes occupational health problems and risks. For women, the total number of working hours, the job tasks, work environment, wage system and other factors associated with paid and unpaid work need to be considered when identifying these problems and risks. Occupational health and safety legislation must also take these factors into account.

Current Chilean law is a barrier to the prevention, diagnosis and compensation of many of the work-related health problems of women processing workers. Under Law 16.744 governing labour accidents and

occupational illnesses, the definition of an occupational health problem requires the identification of a single, objective causal factor directly related to work activity. The law excludes health problems with multiple origins which get worse after performance of certain tasks or those which evolve slowly and are only recognizable after years of exposure to the risk factor. Similar problems exist with conditions that are more difficult to detect because they are expressed in pathologies that are not only biological but also psychological or mental.

Under the current system, women workers in Chile often have problems getting workers' compensation for injuries and health problems originating in the workplace. Many of the conditions that women fish processing workers develop at work are not the result of a single causative factor. In addition, women workers in general often find that problems clearly arising from work are attributed by authorities to their daily household tasks, a situation which rarely occurs for men. A classic example is the case of women in computer data entry jobs who perform repetitive tasks similar to fish plant work. When they are laid off due to severe musculo-skeletal problems, these are not defined as occupational illnesses if the diagnosing physician can demonstrate that the women routinely perform certain household tasks that stress the same troubled areas.

There has been much debate about Law 16,744, and it is currently in dispute. Workers have questioned the right of employers' insurance companies (mandatory occupational health insurance is privatized in Chile) to define both the illness and the level of disability paid out—serving as both diagnostician and critic with a vested interest (workers can, however, appeal the verdict of the insurer's physician to government agencies).

Medical researchers and health professionals often fail to analyze factors that would help them establish links among biological characteristics, psychological effects and workloads for men and women. This serves to mask women's occupational health problems and their causes. Such professionals tend to assume that women's paid and unpaid work is easy, smooth, clean and risk-free, attributing their health problems to psychosomatic and emotional causes. They fail to recognize that the work demands on women can be quite intense, particularly when their invisible unpaid work is taken into account.

Conclusion

Gender-informed programs directed at workplace health and safety need to include a process for identifying gender-specific factors and integrating these into planning, implementation and evaluation. Problems occur when planners and researchers engage in stereotyping when they focus on gender, or when they assume that rhetorical acceptance is tantamount to real action (based on tools), or when they engage in reductionism by associating gender-informed programs exclusively with women. A gender focus must be present

in all aspects and stages of programs, including problem definition, goal-setting, participant selection, communication, implementation and evaluation. The starting point for including gender equity is to recognize the different needs and conditions of men and women and the diversity that also exists within each gender. The workforce is not homogeneous, and the existence of diverse personal and subjective characteristics means that the risks associated with work will affect people differently.

A study done in the early 1990s (Mizala and Romaguera 1993) found that Chilean legislation met international standards of the time and that the country had ratified key International Labour Organization (ILO) agreements. Based on the letter of the law, there appeared to be no issues that could provide the basis for trade protection, but the authors noted that the U.S. and Canada were concerned that some Chilean export sectors—for example, the salmon industry—had failed to implement labour legislation and had maintained working conditions that were unsafe or harmful to worker health. The study did not include a gender-based evaluation of the legislation.

It is commonly argued in Chile that a major obstacle to enforcing labour regulations and improving health and safety standards is the lack of qualified human resources and the greatly reduced budget of the Labour Directorate. Another argument comes from the employers' insurance agents (the Chilean Association of Insurance), who point to a study showing that low education levels among workers make the enforcement of safety regulations ineffective even when workers have a positive attitude. Chile's record in health and safety is weak, and these justifications do not get to the heart of the problem, which is the social responsibility of employers and government and the need to implement effective health and safety prevention measures for different work environments for both women and men. In addition, destination markets for fishery exports should require not only measures to ensure product quality but also higher labour standards for the health and safety of these workers.

An important task for the future is to develop tripartite initiatives among workers, employers and governments. These should be oriented to the importance of workers' health and quality of life, the value of having safe, productive processes in the export sector and the need to monitor production and quality control processes for their effects on the work environment. Such initiatives must use gender-based analysis when developing new policies and programs. Employer and worker representatives must develop an attitude of cooperation and integration and an appreciation of the value of gender-based analysis and the steps involved in achieving it. Employers need to become aware of the impact of labour relations on the competitiveness of their firms and the country as a whole. Workers, for their part, need to embrace health and safety as a priority and negotiate in a non-confrontational way towards better working conditions.

The types of work done by women in fish processing plants often result in health problems that are chronic rather than acute. These problems may not be severe or dramatic in the short term, but they can “make their life painful every day” over the longer term (Messing 1999). Health professionals, as the agents of “objective” science, have often made diagnoses that end up harming women workers and reinforcing inadequate labour standards. In the occupational health system, women have found themselves in a world of men, where their biology, work and social context are often foreign to those who assess them.

Notes

1. For example: the Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico; Agreements of Economic Cooperation with Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mercosur, Peru and Venezuela; the Cooperation Agreement being discussed with the EU; and the Free Trade Agreement with the U.S.
2. The project was supported by the Public Policy Studies Fund in the Engineering Faculty of the University of Chile, and sponsored by the National Work Directorate, the Ministry of Labour, the agency responsible for enforcement of labour legislation. It was carried out under the supervision of the Social Research Center of Arcis University.

Section Five

RESEARCHING GLOBALIZING FISHERIES

Research Relations as Globalization

Feminist Reflections

on the Informant-Researcher Relationship

Siri Gerrard¹

Globalization shapes the production and flow of ideas, ideologies, people and goods, images, messages, technologies and techniques (Appadurai 2000). There are thus both economic and cultural aspects to globalization. Much of this collection has focused on gendered relations of production and exchange within globalizing fisheries. This chapter focuses more on cultural aspects. Appadurai has observed “a growing disjuncture between the globalization of knowledge and the knowledge of globalization,” which he links to “a temporal lag between the processes of globalization and our efforts to contain them conceptually.” He notes that uneven economic development is contributing to the “fragmented and uneven distribution of just those resources for learning, teaching, and cultural criticism that are most vital for the formation of democratic research communities that could produce a global view of globalization” (2000: 4).

Globalization influences what is defined as knowledge as well as the processes and outcomes associated with knowledge production and knowledge exchange within and between societies. Research is an integral part of the process of globalizing knowledge and knowledge-production relationships. Discussions about research generally focus on the nature, extent and dynamics of collaboration. This contribution focuses on collaborations between the researcher and the women and men with whom the researcher interacts in field situations—in other words, between the researcher and her informants. The nature of this relationship is central for researchers who seek to use research to help improve the lives of women in societies where women’s knowledge has been poorly recognized. This is generally the case in contemporary fisheries-dependent communities and regions around the world. Effective collaborative relationships between researchers and informants can help build the democratic research communities needed to address inequities in the distribution of educational and research resources produced by globalization.

Sensitive to the unequal relations between countries of the North and

those of the South with regard to research, Appadurai stresses that “the more marginal regions of the world are not simply producers of data for the theory mills of the North” (2000: 5).² This and his other insights into knowledge production and exchange in a globalizing world are important. In my experience, collaborative research relationships can lead to a valuable and relatively equal exchange of experience and knowledge. This is preferable to the unidirectional transfers and appropriation of knowledge by researchers from informants and their communities that have characterized knowledge exchange and research related to fisheries.

Norway has played a leading role in developing fisheries management systems in some countries of the South including Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa, and Norwegian research models and perspectives have had far-reaching impacts. Norwegian academic institutions also teach fisheries sciences to Third World students. For many years, such students have attended special courses in marine biology at the Institute of Ocean Research at the University of Bergen. In 1998, the Norwegian College of Fishery Science created a master of science program in international fisheries management, in which economic and biological models developed primarily in the North are an important part of the curriculum. This curriculum places little emphasis on cultural differences and women’s roles in fisheries (Norwegian College of Fishery Science 1998). For example, in a course on fisheries development, “Women and Households as Targets in Fishery Development” is only one of five topic areas. Relations among local men and women, bureaucrats and scientists do not receive much attention in this curriculum, even though these relations are crucial to the introduction of change and development. Norway is thus exporting hierarchical, non-collaborative, gender-biased “Western” models of fisheries research and management to countries of the South.

Representatives from Third World countries, such as John Kurien of India,³ have questioned the relevance and utility of Norwegian tools in stock assessment and modelling in countries of the South. These tools are not easy to apply to the Third World because they depend on the development and manipulation of large data sets and computer analysis. They also tend to make only weak connections between fisheries resources and the people who depend on them, with little emphasis on social and cultural aspects of fisheries. These aspects are thus either omitted from fisheries science and management entirely or left to the discretion of local managers.

In Norwegian fisheries research in the North and the South, researchers from many disciplines produce different kinds of knowledge about fisheries and fishery societies. Certain knowledge sets and models are hegemonic over others, as reflected in the importance given to them by political and administrative actors. Marine biologists, economists and political scientists have considerable influence over fisheries policy, while sociologists, social anthropologists and feminist researchers have very little

(Gerrard 1995). However, it is the sociologists and anthropologists who are most often in touch with local men and women in fishery communities and who may have developed more stable relationships with them.

Djingui, Gerrard and Holtedahl (2000) have argued for collaboration between researchers from the northern and southern hemispheres. We also note that while local informants are crucial for the researcher, the benefits for informants from participating in the research process may vary. In some cases, informants feel they are getting valuable new information or reflections as the basis for action. Stable and long-lasting contact between researchers and informants can facilitate mutually committed relationships or collaborative partnerships for action. In some cases, however, the informants are happy when the researchers leave. Below, I use my experiences with feminist research in fisheries communities in Norway, Tanzania and Cameroon⁴ to explore the conditions under which it is possible to achieve meaningful collaborative partnerships between researchers and informants in countries of the North, as well as between northern researchers and informants in countries of the South.

Concepts and Perspectives

Because globalization is often connected to the marginalization of women, research processes need to be examined from a feminist perspective (Wichterich 2000). Developing a feminist perspective on research carried out in the context of globalization means understanding how women and women's knowledge are marginalized and identifying ways to change this. Such research can contribute to globalization from below.

The researcher-informant relation can be analyzed in the same way that feminists have analyzed relations among women in general as being based on shared identifications, feelings and interests (Holter 1982). Communication between researcher and informant can promote understanding and provide a more meaningful context for interpretation of the information collected. However, it can also become a point of disjuncture, for example, if the researcher is selective in choosing the type of information that qualifies as findings or if the informant is selective in the information she or he provides to the researcher. These are challenges that researchers must be aware of and reflect upon. The Norwegian researcher Gullestad (1999) suggests that the term "speaking partner" should replace that of "informant." This might help researchers avoid, or at least reduce, the sense of hierarchy associated with this relationship.

In the context of fieldwork, research relations involve communication, with a flow of information, ideas, ideologies, images and messages—even technologies and techniques—between researcher(s) and informants. Researcher-informant relationships vary in content and form depending on the local, regional, national and international circumstances underlying those relationships. They can also be negotiated and changed as the research

progresses. Collaborators need to come to an agreement about their roles, their relationships and what they have to give and take in the exchange process, but these should also be negotiated over the course of the research. Different kinds of dialogue, actions and reactions can be important vehicles for establishing long-lasting relationships and feelings of confidence between researchers and informants.

It is impossible to develop good collaborations with everyone in a fieldwork situation, so it is important to select actors with whom one can build enduring relationships and engage in dialogue. At least three types of actors are associated with research: informants, with their practical experience, knowledge, images and beliefs; civil servants, NGO workers and politicians who make use of the different types of knowledge but also develop their own knowledge; and researchers, with their findings, models and theories. The ideal would be to develop relationships among these different groups of actors based on equal partnerships. However, this is difficult to achieve.

Striving for equality between researcher and informant, or among collaborating partners, does not mean that all research relationships need to be the same. Equality can be sought with regard to roles, relationships and exchange of knowledge. The nature and extent of the equality achieved in each of these areas can vary without jeopardizing shared feelings of equality. For example, it is obvious that informants provide researchers with valuable information, but it is not always obvious what the researchers give in return. In my work, I have interacted with women and men in many different ways. I have listened to, spoken to and discussed with them. I have eaten, waited and travelled with them. I have taken care of their children, participated with them at meetings, brainstormed with them and initiated small projects with them. Researchers and informants can interact in many different ways, and while exchanges may be unequal in one area, this inequality can be compensated for in other areas. The partners may understand that what is being exchanged is different while still considering the exchange to involve something valuable for both parties (Barth 1966).

The research process can affect knowledge production within the field situation and affect the lives of informants. Publications are one of the most obvious results for the researcher, contributing to knowledge production but also to her career. Co-authorship of publications can affect their content and local relevance (Gerrard et al. 1984) and, for informants, the research relationship can contribute to new ways of understanding their situation or to increased moral support within their communities. They may use research results and/or contact with researchers for their own purpose and benefit, such as political mobilization. Achieving collaboration does not mean that collaborators must see a situation in the same way. Despite their differences, however, through collaboration they may develop new perspectives and insights that might improve their working relationships—

with each other and with other collaborators such as bureaucrats and politicians.

It is important to be aware that actors external to these collaborations can influence the process, outcomes and social consequences of research. For example, politicians, bureaucrats and scientists tend to pay more attention to the researchers' "theories" than to the informants' "opinions." This is common in Norway, as in other countries of the North, where the dominant model of fisheries research, the one most familiar to bureaucrats and politicians, is derived from natural science. Biologists gather data on the abundance, distribution and composition of fish stocks, analyze these with statistical models, arrive at stock assessments and transfer their results to the Fishery Directorate. The Minister of Fisheries then fixes annual fish quotas and allocates them among harvesters and companies. In Norway, as in most countries, it has been difficult to develop a common understanding of who should be permitted to exploit fishery resources, in what way, where and when (Nilsen 1999). There is little in the way of a tradition or basis for collaborative research involving local men and women in the small-scale fisheries with scientists, politicians and bureaucrats. Women in fishery villages, especially fishermen's wives, have had little influence on resource policies despite their considerable contribution to families, villages and the industry (Gerrard 1983 and 1995; Munk-Madsen 1997a).

In Norway, college and university students, union members and associations with female members have shown some interest in gender-related fisheries research. The Norwegian Fishing Industry's Committee for Women's Affairs (*Fiskerinæringas Kvinneutvalg*), to which the Ministry of Fishery has appointed members, has used gender-based research and undertaken initiatives to support it. However gender-based fisheries research has had little or no impact on fisheries policies. Male dominance in fisheries science and in the development and implementation of fisheries policies has been associated with greater attention to the issues of men in the industry and within government. Women's knowledge and their issues have been overlooked or given much less attention (Gerrard 1995).

Holtedahl and Lode (1999), recognizing the value of collaboration in research, argue that research on local environments and resource use involves interactions between researchers, bureaucrats and local people. Effective interactions are essential, because the use of research depends on its acceptance by all of these parties and on the recognition of mutual ownership of the expertise and knowledge that are produced. Where there is not dialogue between researchers and all potential resource users, there is little prospect that knowledge will be effectively disseminated or used for equitable and successful development. The potential for knowledge exchange is directly related to who owns it. When knowledge is appropriated and developed by specialists, its "return" to local communities is hampered, along with the possibility of effective collaboration in resource initiatives.

The remainder of this contribution discusses some of the challenges I have encountered with researcher–informant relationships developed over thirty years of fieldwork in Norway, Tanzania and Cameroon. In each case, I sought to develop collaborative partnerships with informants and sometimes with bureaucrats and representatives of NGOs. These examples are used to reflect on the use of collaborative models in different, widely dispersed social and cultural contexts. The examples allow me to situate my role and work as a researcher within the larger issues explored in this chapter and the book as a whole (Haraway 1991).

Collaboration between Researchers and Informants in Small-Scale Fisheries

In fisheries, local collaborators may be women and men who belong to different ethnic groups and come from different areas. They can be fishers, fishery workers, trades people, including brokers, and transport workers. They can also be civil servants, bureaucrats, politicians and public and private consultants. All can be part of explicit or implicit global networks. These actors probably also have other roles and statuses, such as fathers, mothers, husbands, wives or relatives, just to mention some. Since local fisheries are increasingly linked to global systems, important actors can be situated in different locations with different relations to others in these systems. Traders, for example, often move from one place to another in order to reach consumers. Civil servants, bureaucrats and politicians may move between their offices, meetings and work in fishing communities.

Researchers are also a varied and complex group, participating in many roles and relations simultaneously. I have been a female ethnographer, a girlfriend and eventually wife of a fisherman, a worker, a domestic servant, a helper, an “aunt,” a friend, a feminist, a stranger, a woman from the South of Norway and a White person, to mention only some. In order to illustrate how collaborative relationships vary depending on the context in which the research is carried out, I will begin with early experiences in Norway and Tanzania and end with recent experience in Cameroon. In these examples, both women and men have acted as collaborative partners.

Norway

My first fieldwork as a student was in a fishing village in Finnmark, Norway,⁵ where I observed and analyzed many aspects of women’s and men’s lives. My thesis was a community study of women’s and men’s work and the impact of the social organization of work on collective action at the local level (Gerrard 1975). I worked in a processing plant, baited long lines, and the fishermen let me fish with them. A housewife opened her home to me, and I helped her with her Christmas preparations. I initially lived in a dormitory for female processing workers, called Hybelhuset, and later with my boyfriend and his parents. These settings were a good opportunity to get to know

different people's perceptions of the fishery and fishery work. My female colleagues in Hybelhuset were eager to tell me how much they liked their work and how they preferred a quiet life during the week, with parties and socializing on the weekends. After a while, I learned that the married women in the village were saying that these young women from other communities were "too fond of parties." The young men and women from the village, who also visited the dormitory and came to the parties, were not stigmatized and gossiped about in the same way as these outsiders.

As a "respectable woman" living in the dormitory, I was not affected by these stigmatizing rumours, but neither did I accept them. I decided to invite some of the fishery families and their children to my room in the dormitory during afternoons and weekends, in the hope of convincing the women that we who lived in the dormitories were fairly normal young women. These visits helped them see us differently, but they also helped me understand the origins of their concern. Hybelhuset to them was not just a dormitory and a place for young unmarried adults but also a place where the fishermen spent much time, because the ground floor housed the rooms where they repaired their nets. Some fishermen occasionally participated in the Saturday night parties instead of going home to their families, and their wives did not appreciate this. As our dialogue developed, I felt that we became speaking partners. I learned more about the basis for their view of us, and some of the fishing families learned more about everyday life in the Hybelhuset.

During this fieldwork, I also participated in most of the work done by fishermen's wives. As we worked together, they told me about their challenges. After writing my thesis, I sent it to the women and men for their comments. Some said that I had presented a true picture of their lives. However, some women said that I gave the impression that the women were dependent on their husbands, and they felt the opposite—that they had most of the responsibility at home and were the managers of family life and the household. This reaction and others like it forced me to go further into the material. As a young feminist Marxist, I had stressed the extent to which the organization of the women's work was strongly influenced by the organization of their husbands' fishing (Gerrard 1975). Little by little, my understanding of their situation became more nuanced. I compared the rights and duties associated with their work as fishermen's wives with the rights and duties allocated to them by society. I pointed out a strong mismatch between these rights and duties that I interpreted as resulting from a lack of formal, public recognition of women's work in the fishery sector (Gerrard 1983). When I first presented this idea to a largely male audience at a seminar arranged by the Norwegian Research Fishery Council, a fisherman and some others reacted strongly to it, describing it as far from their reality. However, since that time, I have been supported in this analysis by members of fisherwomen's associations, and over the years, many of them have begun to speak about

themselves as “the shore crew,” a concept that came from the analysis.

By combining my own observations with the stories told by the women and discussions of their reactions to my analysis, I have managed to develop research with which they can identify. We have developed a shared version of some aspects of fisherwomen’s lives through collaboration. We have exchanged different kinds of knowledge, and, during the exchange process, my own understanding and perspectives have changed. The prerequisites for this kind of exchange include common meeting places and long-lasting relationships. I have arranged and participated in meetings and seminars with fisherwomen, fishermen and researchers, and in this way we have collaborated in the development of concepts and understanding. We have also tried to define and influence fisheries policy.

Tanzania⁶

My research in Tanzania also focused on fisheries—in particular, women’s roles and gender dynamics. I collaborated with two Tanzanian researchers, John Wemba Rashid, one of the few anthropologists in Tanzania at the time, and Vivian Bashemererwa, a biologist who had “converted” to women’s studies. We did our research in several villages along the shores of Lake Victoria, close to the border of Kenya, where we found that women fish traders partially supported their families. Most of our women informants told us about the extreme challenges they faced in attempting to provide their families with food, cash, clothing and school fees. One such challenge was competition from traders who bought the fish to sell in Kenya, in bigger towns and in more remote villages. The women were in danger of losing access to the fish because these foreign traders could afford to pay more for it.

Many of these women, but men in particular, expected that “White people” like myself should bring “development projects” to their villages. Some even believed that I had come to do feasibility studies and that my husband, who was a fisher, would come with boats, cars and equipment for them. For this reason and because of the women’s extremely difficult working conditions, I felt pressured to do something for the villages. Together with my Tanzanian colleagues and the regional fisheries civil servant, I organized a Norwegian-Tanzanian conference with a focus on women and men in the fisheries of the future. The seminar was financed by the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD). As a result of the seminar, female students were recruited to some of the short courses in the region. The Mbegani Fishery Centre also eventually arranged courses for women in the village where I did my fieldwork. In these courses, local women were taught ways to help them improve the quality of their smoked fish. They were also taught how to build smoking ovens or kilns and to organize cooperative groups. However, the difficulties they encountered with organizing these groups were so great that they soon gave up and

continued to work as they had before (Gerrard 1991).

In my research collaboration in Tanzania, the partners contributed to the construction of knowledge and, in different ways, to its dissemination. As Norwegians, we emphasized the importance of the fishery as researchers interested in gender questions, and as Norwegian and Tanzanian civil servants interested in fisheries development, we were able to gain acceptance of new ideas and funding for new activities. Developing formal knowledge documenting the women's efforts and difficulties contributed to our success. However, local women had not asked for courses and cooperative groups. Rather, they wanted cars to help them bring their fish to a nearby town where they could get better prices. As a result, some were disappointed. The local women, civil servants and researchers learned something about the challenges of realizing fishery projects. We collaborated successfully for awhile, but in the long run the project did not permit these women to improve their ability to compete in the fish trade in the way they had hoped. Knowing about the competition faced by the women did not mean that I could reduce that competition or affect the price of fish in the markets. Global economic forces were stronger than our capacity to use the knowledge gained by our collaboration to stimulate globalization from below.

Cameroon

In Cameroon, I conducted research in the village of Mbakaou in the Djerem District, North Cameroon (Gerrard 1996). The research was carried out with Cameroonian researchers and assistants Mahmoudou Djingui, Rachel Djesa Issa and Ousmanou Babawa.⁷ The village of Mbakaou was established in the wake of the construction of a water reservoir for an electrical power plant in the 1960s. Its inhabitants come from many places and different ethnic groups in North and South Cameroon. People from South Cameroon and from the ethnic groups of Gbaya, Mboum, Haussa and Fulani are mostly traders. Representatives of the Vute, Arab Shua, Kotoko and Mouskum ethnic groups are mostly fishermen and come from North Cameroon and Nigeria. The Mouskum have a reputation for being more successful than local fishermen, and they perform different roles in the fishery. Fishermen from the local ethnic groups of Gbaya, the Mboum or the Voute often combine fishing with agriculture, and their wives and children also participate in the work.

Women generally have a lot of responsibility for their children and families, meaning they are responsible for the coordination of their households and for most household activities. The fish trade seems to become the main source of income when other resources disappear, a way for women to cope with financial crises. They specialize in buying and selling fish, either fresh or smoked. In Mbakaou, some hire young boys to go to the beach and buy fish either from fishermen or the men who collect fish. Women who smoke fish do so in their own smoking kilns at home or

with their husbands in the fishing camps. Those who sell fresh fish have access to freezers and electricity. The latter are scarce resources⁸ in the village, however, so if they have problems with their freezers, they smoke the fish.

The so-called *buy-em-sellems* traders come from the towns and cities, including the capital, as well as Yaoundé, Ngaoundéré and Bertoua. Most are females who base their trade on fixed and stable relations with the women who own or rent the freezers. In Mbakaou, many of the *buy-em-sellems* are wives of civil servants or businessmen who are forced to look for other sources of income after their husbands' work has decreased or their salaries have declined in value. These women's fish trade has become an important source of cash for some of these families. The *buy-em-sellems* emphasize that their work is not easy: it can be hard and often dangerous, since they travel at night and there are thefts and other disturbances. In some cases, they also have to challenge ideals of how women should behave. Because of their ability to take chances and cross borders and because of their wish to make a profit, they can be characterized as women who cope with all kinds of crises (Gerrard 1995).

Ethnicity also plays an important role in the organization of fishery work. Fulani women in Mbakaou rarely sell fish, but when they do, they sell to traders who come to their houses. Gbaya and Mboum women seem to have specialized in trading in smoked fish, either by going to the market or being contacted by the *buy-em-sellems*. In Mbakaou, there is also a Nigerian, a Yoruba woman who has also done business from another area, Lagdo, near Garoua. At times, she considers the fish resources in the waters near Mbakaou to be too scarce to give her the desired profit; when the chances to earn money have been good, some of her young relatives have come from Nigeria to trade.

Since I began this research in 1992, men and women in Mbakaou have been complaining about the lack of fish. The diversity of the local fishery and some other problems mean that some fishers and traders are only able to use the fishery to supplement their incomes. Others manage to be good breadwinners for their families, and some manage to make a considerable profit. Their incomes depend on how hard they work and the availability of fish. When fish is plentiful, the number of traders also increases, but when fish is scarce, many traders stay home. There are cases where local traders, like the migrating fishermen, have moved to other dams where the resources are more abundant and the profits much greater.

In Mbakaou, there is a government-run fishery centre financed by the Japanese, where imported equipment is guarded by local civil servants who also sell licences to the fishers and traders and administer and control fishing and fish trade in the area. The workers in the centre are supervised by the head of the district government office for fisheries, cattle holding and agricultural industry, situated in the nearest town, Tibati. This government

officer fears over-exploitation of the fish resources, especially since the economic crisis following the 1994 currency devaluation in Cameroon. The number of traders from other towns and cities has increased enormously since that time, he says, because the demand for fish is so high. As a result, fishers are going into breeding areas and catching undersized fish. He emphasizes that the situation has become so severe that several fishers have asked him to help them by intensifying surveillance. However, because of lack of money, he and the other civil servants cannot control the prohibited fishing zones.

In Mbakaou, as in the Tanzanian villages, some fishermen talked about their lack of means and equipment. They hoped that I could provide equipment for further development in the fisheries, having either lost faith or had little confidence in the local fishery centre. With my experience from Tanzania in mind, I did not dare to start fishery development activities. In contrast to Tanzania, there were few institutions with which to collaborate, fishery centre employees being preoccupied with management and surveillance. I focused on research instead, so that students and teachers at the universities would be aware of the fishery as an interesting field of study and a potential route for future development.

I also established contact with women in the village who belonged to a savings club, Femmes Choisies, which had survived for more than three years. A majority of the members were fish traders, and they wanted to find ways to augment their money-making activities that might also benefit their village. Activities related to agriculture, a mill and sewing machines to make children's clothing were some possibilities. When these discussions began, the members identified several problems and many unanswered questions that needed to be addressed before starting new projects. Should they open a bank account? Who should have the rights to sign cheques? How could they avoid losing money? Did the members have confidence in each other? What kinds of projects could all members participate in? I was about to leave when these discussions began, so it was agreed that I would look for funding, while the women in the savings club tried to find solutions to some of these problems. The women were unable to resolve these problems, and available funding was invested in a classroom instead.

I am also collaborating with the head of the government office for fisheries, cattle holding and the agricultural industry in the Djerem district. He has a Ph.D. in veterinarian studies and wants to launch a research project to get more information on fish stocks and on the fishermen's and traders' use of the fish. He wrote a research proposal, and I tried to find funding for it in Norway. I also suggested that we arrange a seminar where local groups of actors could start a dialogue as a way of bridging their differences, having had success in the past with creating meeting places where participants could discuss their problems. To date, we have identified only limited financial support for these endeavours.

Conclusion

These examples demonstrate that different actors in the research process, including the researchers, come up with different explanations, expectations and solutions based on their experience, knowledge and interests. My research interests in gender and the improvement of women's situations have coloured my construction of knowledge, just as the collaborators have constructed their own versions. The different actors can live happily if their lives are kept apart, but in these cases, the partners interacted and questioned each other's versions.

In Norway, the fishery women and the female researcher met in several different arenas. In the fishing village, my negotiations and collaborations with local women influenced my research. At the national level, I collaborated with representatives of women's associations and with politically active students. Some years later, they formed The Fishery Industry's Committee for Women's Affairs to promote the interests of the fishery and coastal women. However, their contact with male civil servants and politicians was not very developed and, as a result, they had very limited influence on fisheries policy making. The committee no longer exists.

In Tanzania, the local population, the researcher and the civil servants interacted both formally and informally. Formally, we tried to do something together for a short period of time. In most cases, we were speaking partners who also did things together. Formal collaborative efforts were possible because of external support and a common interest in supporting small-scale fisheries. In Cameroon, collaborative efforts have been more informal and more directed towards research. I have been reluctant to enter into more formal collaborative development efforts, because experience in Tanzania taught me that such efforts must be sustained. I have succeeded in developing close relationships, mainly with women and men from outside the village. The presence of local research expertise in the Cameroon case has made it possible to initiate new studies and broaden local and scientific competence. By mobilizing different partners, I have tried to create situations in which the parties are better positioned to establish ownership of the knowledge and competence produced.

Research in these different locations has resulted in long-lasting and stable relationships with fishermen, fishermen's wives, male and female fishery workers and fish traders. Local people have taught me about their way of life, the fishery, resource problems, equipment shortages, their financial situations and the changes in their lives and their villages. Sustained contact with these communities over several years has allowed me to observe changes in the lives of my informants and in their communities, as well as in the national and international contexts for their fisheries. I have learned how family members have had to cope with over-exploitation of fish resources and problems in the markets. Comparisons I have been able to draw between problems and solutions in different societies have fuelled

discussions and exchanges of information and opinions. That said, I have probably made more use of the information I acquired in the field than the fishermen, fish workers and fish traders have made of the information they acquired from me.

Collaboration depends on the creation of informal and formal meeting places, which can vary in size and character. Stable meeting places, where the actors can gain insight into each other's interests and strategies, and identify solutions to their problems, create the potential for collaborative relationships where there is room for negotiation even on touchy questions and conflicts. Success depends on all partners having a sense that they will gain something. However, even with the best collaborations, identifying workable strategies that will sustain fish resources and achieve viable families is extremely challenging (Gerrard 1995). Collaborative partners can be considered speaking partners in some situations and acting partners in others. Such informant-researcher relationships can be built, on the one hand, on common identifications and feelings and, on the other hand, on mutual interests (Holter 1982). Sometimes they can be built on both. Researchers, local women and men, civil servants and politicians can participate in dialogues that produce new knowledge. Research relationships can contribute to the development of collaborations at the local, regional, national and global levels.

Students of fisheries need to learn how to promote dialogue and to look upon local men and women, as well as civil servants, as collaborating partners. This is not an easy task. It takes time to exchange information. It means developing new perspectives on research and new teaching methods in the universities appropriate to different cultures. It means more relevant and appropriate research. Interdisciplinary research teams and the acceptance of local knowledge need to be encouraged.

Understanding gender is crucial in the field of fisheries research. This means focusing on local women's involvement and knowledge. It also points to the need for more women in research positions and recognition of women's collaborative models by scientists, bureaucrats and politicians. It means that all partners, including the women, must feel that they own the knowledge. The chance for such collaboration can increase in conjunction with the development of connections among women with an interest in fisheries in the South and the North. Collaboration across national borders, disciplines, institutions and professions, and with local men and women, may help people to become pioneers in their own development (Barth 1992). From a feminist standpoint, this means that fishery people and fishery-interested people from the North and the South must collaborate in knowledge building, since the fish, its markets and the knowledge about fish have no borders. If we succeed in this, we might also succeed in introducing new knowledge, perspectives, methods and strategies as important steps towards sustaining resources and improving lives. However, as researchers,

we must ask if our strategies are enough to resist and influence global capitalist—and strongly masculine—economies.

On a more general level, such collaborations can contribute to the globalization of knowledge, reducing the fragmented and uneven distribution of resources for learning, teaching and cultural analysis, as well as building “the conditions that are vital for the formation of democratic research communities producing a global view of globalization” (Appadurai 2000: 4). Without acceptance of women and women’s perspectives in knowledge production, this will be impossible.

Notes

1. This chapter is based on a paper delivered to an international conference on the relations between universities and their environments, at the University of Ngaoundéré, Cameroon, December 1999.
2. See also Power and Harrison, this volume.
3. An academic with broad experience in comparative fishery research, Kurien conducted research on the coast of Kerala, where the Norwegian government had a fishery project for many years. He questioned “Western” methods at a meeting at the Norwegian College of Fishery Science in 1997.
4. Most of my research in Norway builds on experience in fishing communities in Finnmark, especially Skarsvåg, and contact with local men and women there. Thanks to Jørgen Lindkvist, I have been able to maintain contact with this community. In Tanzania, I stayed in Shirati and collaborated with researchers John Wemba Rashid and Vivian Basjemererwa. In North Cameroon, I collaborated with fishery women and men living in or coming to Mbakaou in the province of Adamaoua. Without support from Al Hadji Bassoro, Hadja Jau, Mata, Aissatou, their children and other family members, this work would not have been possible. Ousmanou Babawa, Rachel Djesa Issa and Mahamoudou Djingui, with the “Ngaoundéré Anthropos” project, have also collaborated in this research. My warmest thanks go to them all. I also thank Lisbet Holtedahl, Kirsti Pedersen and Marianne Gullestad for their ongoing inspiration and Ole Petter Gurholt for his help with translation.
5. This work began in 1972, and I have continued with fieldwork and visits to this village.
6. I did fieldwork in 1986/87 and again in 1989.
7. Fieldwork has been conducted intermittently between 1992 and the present.
8. Before 1999, only the workers of the company that produces the electricity and guards the water reservoir had access to electricity.

The Power of Gender Ideology in the Face of Resource Decline in Newfoundland, Canada¹

Nicole Power and Donna Harrison

This chapter describes how traditional patriarchal social forms in Newfoundland fishing communities have been strengthened somewhat by policy, by industry and household responses to resource degradation and by the erosion of the economic base of many of these communities.² We argue that constrained economic opportunities for women (and men) in fishing communities affected by the collapse of Newfoundland's groundfish stocks and industry and policy initiatives to professionalize fishing and privatize access to fish resources have reinforced a gendered division of labour in some households. This gendered division of labour entrenches the bifurcation of public and private realms, contributes to the invisibility of women's paid work and prioritizes women's primary role as domestic caregivers. Our interviews with women and men in the Newfoundland fishing industry in the 1990s reveal discourses that tend to solidify, and even idealize, women's caring labour and to support male dominance. Such discourses act to protect masculine privilege, as alternative representations for women are downplayed and their exclusion from the productive sphere is intensified.

In this chapter, we use Indian feminist economist Bina Agarwal's insights to elucidate the material basis for reinforced gender ideology and the related forced return by women in Newfoundland fishing communities to the private sphere of the household. This is a reversal of the common tendency to use insights from feminist theory developed by writers from the North to understand problems in countries of the South. In her research on gender oppression in village communities in northern India, Agarwal (1998 and 2001) has shown that resource degradation and privatization processes are promoting similar "revivalist" tendencies in other commons-dependent rural communities.

Agarwal's World

Agarwal (1998) describes the villages in northern India where she has done her work. In those villages, the village and forest commons have been important for primary or supplementary subsistence, with poorer households (without access to private land) being especially dependent on such commons. Within these households, gendered dependence is evident. Women's lack of ownership of private property, the gendered division of labour which allocates to women much of the fuel and fodder gathering

work and the unequal distribution of access to basics like health care and food mean that women's dependence on the commons for subsistence is particularly high (Agarwal 1997). In these situations, environmental decline of the commons resources—brought about by a “shift in property relations away from communal hands to State and individual hands” (Agarwal 2001: 1625)—is particularly devastating for women.

In India, land under commons “has been falling dramatically: it fell by 45–60 per cent between 1950 and 1984, in many states” and has been largely replaced by private agricultural and plantation tenure, submersion by hydro-electric and irrigation projects and urban spread (Agarwal 1998: 58; see also Agarwal 1986). The remaining forestry commons resource has also been dramatically thinned. Although state governments initially responded by encouraging private farmers to plant trees, such plantings were usually designed for commercial purposes, which historically were met with much resistance from the poor. As a result, the prevailing consensus among state governments today is that these forest resources should be managed locally by communities; however, little attention has been paid to the “possible effects of different institutional arrangements on social relations, especially gender relations” (Agarwal 1998: 60). In addition, environmental scholars have tended to perpetuate a nostalgic interpretation of harmonious pre-colonial relations, a tendency that has influenced communal management strategies in India. Carefully examining historical evidence, Agarwal points out that in the pre-colonial period, relations with nature in northern India were neither ecologically balanced nor socially harmonious. To maintain otherwise not only distorts history but encourages ecological strategies that reproduce the complex interlinkage of class, caste and gender hierarchies.

For Agarwal, the real test of effectiveness and viability for any ecological solution must be the egalitarian relations and values engendered therein, or else one runs the risk of not only reinforcing old hierarchies of oppression but creating new ones as well (Agarwal 1998). Any ecological strategy is, therefore, considerably weakened by its failure to problematize unequal gender relations (and by extension, their interconnectedness with other oppressive forms). Ecofeminism prioritizes the link between women's liberation and environmental protection. However, Agarwal (1997 and 1998) challenges the assumption in many ecofeminist discourses that women, by virtue of their relation to nature, have a particular stake in environmental protection. The fact that women are “often visibly present, sometimes even in the forefront of protests organised by environmental groups,” does not necessarily equate to a movement or results that are in their collective interests (Agarwal 1998: 73). What is lacking in much ecofeminist work, she maintains, is an understanding of the persisting institutional forms of oppression that shape women's agency. While women's resistance can take many forms, e.g., from “individual-covert to group-overt (with individual-

overt and group-covert coming in between),” women remain constrained in their ability to move from one sort of resistance strategy to another, largely because of “participatory exclusions” from the political forums in which forestry decisions are made (1998: 73; see also Agarwal 2001). Agarwal concludes: “To be effective agents of changing their own situation ... requires also the ability to challenge and transform in their own interest the formal structures that control natural use and abuse” (1998: 73). Women need to be able to access economic and political spheres and institutions in order to assert autonomous influence and directionality over them and to challenge or transform the formal, structural determinants of the economy.

Agarwal provides us with a materialist understanding of constraints on women’s capacity to transform oppressive and unequal gender relations. Although her cases focus on forestry and land rather than oceanic ecosystems, her analysis is particularly useful for understanding the position of women elsewhere in the world who are economically dependent on common property resources threatened by degradation. Local gender ideologies, divisions of labour and the distribution of resources reinforce and shape women’s relationships with nature, which differ both within and between different parts of the world. However, there are often similarities, as well, in terms of what Shiva (1989) terms “mal-development,” and these are not accidental. Rather, they are connected to a history of patriarchal colonialism and the adoption of neo-liberal policies of free market exercise and state withdrawal around the world.

Women in fishing communities in Newfoundland, Canada, like those in Agarwal’s villages in northern India, are largely dependent for their economic survival on dwindling commons resources controlled and managed by agents and organizations over which they have little influence. In Newfoundland, there is less subsistence activity; thus, this dependence is more strongly mediated by the commodified form—that is, by wage-labour and mercantilist petty commodity market relations. Contemporary women processing workers are distanced from the fishery because of their positions in factories and, for some, marginal roles on fishing vessels. India and Newfoundland differ in other ways as well. India is a relatively powerful nation, yet highly vulnerable to the agendas of supranational institutions, and it provides little economic security for its people, who rely heavily and primarily on the informal sector and access to common resources for survival. The environmental impacts of dependence and industrialization in Newfoundland, on the other hand, have been lessened to some degree by access to Canadian social welfare programs. Newfoundland and India are not typical North-South examples. India has a highly developed manufacturing sector, but Newfoundland is a peripheral area within an industrialized nation, and in many ways its economy looks a lot like that of a developing country: it is heavily dependent on resource extraction and international export; there are high levels of poverty and unemployment; and there is a

disproportionate reliance on jobs that are seasonal and low paying (Fishery Research Group 1986; Canada-HRDC 1998).

The Newfoundland Context

As indicated elsewhere in this volume (Binkley, McCay), by the early 1990s, groundfish stocks in waters off Canada's east coast were in serious trouble, despite an extensive, science-based management system. In 1992, in response to declining stocks, the Canadian federal government made an extraordinary decision to place a moratorium on northern cod in areas 2J3KL,³ and by 1995, moratoria had been extended to nearly all groundfish stocks around Newfoundland. Upwards of thirty thousand fisheries workers in Newfoundland were directly affected, or 12 percent of the total labour force (Sinclair et al. 1999). The effects of the stock collapses were exacerbated by neo-liberal state restructuring policies that intensified the processes of fisher dispossession. Adjustment initiatives accompanying the moratoria prioritized debt reduction and reduced social spending, expanded export production, increased access and entry regulation and encouraged withdrawal from the fishery (with financial assistance). The Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Package (NCARP) and the subsequent Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) provided temporary income support but also directed recipients into alternative careers or early retirement (Canada-HRDC 1998; Fish, Food and Allied Workers 1994a and 1994b). However, career change was made difficult as public funding for post-secondary education was slashed and private, expensive schools replaced public colleges, and as tighter eligibility criteria for the unemployment insurance program reduced access to benefits and training (Neis et al. 2001; Skipton 1997). When few fishing families opted out of the fishery but instead chose to hang onto their licences should stocks return, the 1998 Canadian Fisheries Adjustment and Restructuring Program was introduced as a last attempt to reduce the number of groundfish licence holders through an assisted retirement scheme (Canada-DFO 2001).

State policy was informed by the "tragedy of the commons" thesis, according to which stock collapses and poverty in the industry are a consequence of common property and the tendency for there to be "too many fishermen chasing too few fish" (see, for example, Canada-DFO 2002). This justified increased state intervention in the management of the fisheries beginning in the 1970s and has been used more recently to argue for increased privatization of the ownership and management of fisheries resources. While the fisheries of Canada technically belong to the Canadian people and the constitutional authority for Canadian fisheries resides with the federal government (Canada-DFO 1996 and 2001), a focus on debt reduction and international competitiveness is lending support for the retrenchment of government services and the adoption of business models by government. In an effort to transfer more responsibility to participants,

the federal government has instituted Enterprise Allocations, Individual Quotas (IQs) and Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs), which allocate quotas to individual enterprises or harvesters in order to replace annual renewing arrangements with longer terms for fleet shares and allocations (Canada-DFO). With Enterprise Allocations, processing companies with offshore fleets are assigned part of the annual quota. Individual Quotas in Newfoundland take the form of boat quotas, in which individual boats are assigned part of the annual quota and the rights are not transferable or divisible (McCay 1999).

Another part of the federal government's restructuring strategy involves the reclassification of inshore fish harvesters into "core" and "non-core" categories. There is exclusive membership in the core group—entry into which is through replacement only—to further limit capacity. Prerequisites for membership include heading an enterprise, holding key licences and demonstrating attachment to, and dependence on, the fishery (Canada-DFO 1996 and 2001). The core and non-core categories are used by the state to determine who gets what fisheries resources. For example, core members have privileged access to replacement licences, new licences and replacement vessels. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has also supported a professionalization strategy for fish harvesters (Canada-DFO 2001). In 1997, the registration system used by DFO incorporated and applied the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board's gradient designations—Apprentice Fish Harvester, Level I, Level II—with existing fishers grandparented to the appropriate certification levels based on historic attachment. Historic attachment is defined by the number of years fishing, and dependence on the industry is defined by fishing income.

The strategy pursued by the state has ignored the fundamental difference in harvesting capacity per employed fisher associated with the inshore, nearshore and offshore sectors and the fact that the most serious stock collapses have occurred in offshore areas, where Enterprise Allocations were introduced early on and where there has not been open access to fish resources in recent years (Alcock 2000). Nevertheless, there is broad acceptance in Canada of the need for fiscal restraint, especially when dealing with the Newfoundland fishery. This largely reflects the view not only that fisheries workers are to blame for the collapse of the industry in the first place but that they have become an unacceptable drain on the social welfare system (Neis and Williams 1997). This acceptance has allowed the continued downsizing of the fishery—with the infrastructure in place to manage it and the establishment of new exclusionary criteria for access to resources—to proceed with only localized resistance.

Private ownership of resources does not equate to conservation. While Individual Quotas temporarily limit competition for fish, small-boat quotas, high costs to vessel owners for fisheries management, higher licence fees and more limited access to unemployment insurance benefits are pushing

fishers to increase effort in the long term. Individual Transferable Quotas have been associated with ecologically adverse effects (Copes 1996). Research on fisheries in Canada and elsewhere (Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters 2001; Neis and Williams 1997; Skaptadóttir and Proppé, this volume) also indicates that once quotas are transferable, individuals and corporations buy them up, leading to a concentration of ownership and the elimination of rights of crew members and their families to independent access to such resources.

Thus, government strategies for negotiating the stock collapses include moratoria on fishing and restructuring of the industry by means of downsizing and increased privatization of access to the fisheries commons in Newfoundland. This strategy is similar to contemporary state strategies described by Agarwal (1997 and 1998) for India's commons. Canadian transfer of property rights under state-coordinated organizational structures parallels what she terms the "statisation" of village and communal property in the forested areas of northern India. In both places, these policies are posing a threat to conservation by enhancing the commodification of the resources of the commons. In India, commercial plantations replace diverse wild forests, and forest land, once logged, is used for capitalist enterprise (or is flooded for power projects). In Newfoundland, fishers become more fully subsumed under capital, access to fisheries becomes more commodified and management increasingly facilitates capitalist development at the expense of communal access. The effects of these parallel processes are predictable: fisher families, like the forestry-dependent families in Agarwal's research, are largely dispossessed of the means of their livelihood, with the poorer of these households being especially vulnerable.

In Newfoundland, these policies have contributed to a dramatic decline in fisheries employment and, for some, in income. Newfoundland's fishing industry employed on average 16,200 people in 2002, compared with over 20,000 in 1991 (Newfoundland and Labrador Dept. of Finance 2003a). Processing work has been especially affected as a result of plant closures, reduced quotas for groundfish, increased automation and a strong focus on producing crab sections, which are less labour-intensive than crab meat production (typical of the past), and groundfish processing (Newfoundland and Labrador Dept. of Fisheries and Aquaculture 2001). In 1992, the provincial government licensed 193 primary processing plants and eleven secondary plants; in 2000, there were 67 fewer active licensed primary plants and two fewer secondary processing plants (Newfoundland and Labrador Dept. of Fisheries and Aquaculture 2003b).

The effect on the incomes of those remaining in the fishery has been mixed. "On an overall basis, over 81% of fishery workers in 1991 had incomes of \$20,000 or less; by 1999, those with incomes of \$20,000 or less accounted for only 55% of the total." However, "about 75% of the increase in the high income categories accrued to fishers" (Newfoundland and Labrador Dept.

of Finance 2003a: 19) rather than to processing workers. Increased incomes, and the increased concentration of wealth reflects the increased value of landings, including particularly high prices for crab landings, and an industrial concentration on shellfish (Newfoundland and Labrador Dept. of Fisheries and Aquaculture 2003a; Newfoundland and Labrador Dept. of Finance 2003b). Regions and households with a recent history of crab and shrimp harvesting and processing are coping better than those heavily dependent on the groundfishery.

Impacts of State Adjustment on Women

In her research on community forestry development, Agarwal (2001) underscores the role of the state and other forestry institutions in perpetuating exclusions of significant sections of the population dependent on the forest resource. Chief among those excluded are women. Agarwal argues that gender equity in outcomes and strategies for resource-dependent and -depleted communities requires the effective participation of both men and women (of all class and caste categories) in the decisions and processes of management and development. She notes that women are commonly excluded from meaningful participation, in part due to prevailing patriarchal rules, norms and perceptions and the endowments and attributes of those affected—in other words, women's lack of bargaining power inside communities and the related the invisibility of their labour.

The remainder of this chapter draws on research with women and men living in fishing communities in the Bonavista-Trinity Bay area on the northeast coast of Newfoundland. Our findings not only underscore Agarwal's conclusions about the importance of women's material relations to resources and power, but they also point to the role that gender ideology—something rather neglected in Agarwal's account—plays in maintaining and reinforcing unequal and oppressive gender relations. We draw on findings from interviews⁴ conducted between 1995 and 1998 with ninety-seven fisheries workers (fifty-eight men and thirty-nine women). Eighty-five percent of the female respondents and 17 percent of the male respondents identified themselves as fish plant workers. Eighty-three percent of the men said they were independent inshore or nearshore fishers or crewmembers on offshore company-owned trawlers. Ten percent of the women had fished, either before or after the 1992 northern cod moratorium, with their male partners. These fisheries workers were members of the Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union. Most depended for employment or fish sales on a single, multinational company, Fishery Products International, which owned and operated the local inshore and offshore plants, the local trawler fleet and some of the local crab licences.

In Newfoundland, the collapse of the groundfish fisheries has had gendered effects on the lives of fisheries-dependent people. Our research has found that state industrial restructuring and social welfare policies for

the Newfoundland fishery have built-in systemic biases that render women invisible and structurally impotent. Although state intervention was ostensibly supposed to benefit all community members, it has generally increased, not decreased, women's dependence on male workers, reinforcing their invisibility in this sector. Restructuring and adjustment initiatives in the Atlantic fisheries have primarily targeted an assumed male breadwinner, ignoring women's contributions to household reproduction. As a result, women have had less access to public aid than men, and their political voice has been muted.

Men accrue a patriarchal dividend from the outside world, including state money and programs, by virtue of being recognized economic heads of households. They benefit from the material relations that encourage women to take responsibility for reproductive and care work. Men and women tended to lose access to work and income after the groundfish moratoria in Newfoundland. However, women workers have generally lost more than male fishers and plant workers. Women are concentrated in the processing sector, which was hit particularly hard by the crisis. They also generally occupied the more vulnerable positions there (Neis et al. 2001).

In the region where this study was based, the seasonal inshore plant at Bonavista, which had processed mainly codfish and snow crab, now processes mainly snow crab. As a result, many female workers have been displaced. When cod fish processing came to an end in the plant, some male plant workers moved into crab processing jobs that had been traditionally women's jobs, displacing less senior female workers. Men were also exclusively hired for renovation and repair jobs. It appears that the "nature" of these jobs precluded the hiring of women. The offshore groundfish plant which operated year-round in the area for more than ten years closed its doors in 1992, reopening in 1998 as a specialized and highly-automated shrimp processing facility, with a substantially reduced workforce. In this plant, women were more likely to lose their jobs than men, and those few who have kept their jobs have tended to experience downtime and layoffs earlier than men plant workers because of gender differences in seniority. The seniority system fails to compensate for the interruptions and delays to women's paid work caused by their responsibilities for home and childcare (Power 1997).

In Newfoundland, there has been an increase in the number of women fishing since the early 1980s—women went from 8 percent of fish harvesters in 1981 to 20 percent by 2000 (Grzetic 2002). This increase in their participation rate was a response to several factors, including decreased work opportunities for women due to fish plant closures and increased operating costs that make family-based enterprises attractive because more money is kept in the household—a strategy noted by others (Binkley, this volume). Nevertheless, women's status as fishers remains subordinate to that of men. Husband-wife fishing couples explained that fishing licences

and boat ownership were registered in the husband's name, and that he dealt with buyers. The nature of women's entry, which is often dependent on cooperation from their husbands or other men, and the fact that they are relatively new to commercial fishing have influenced women's status on the vessels. In addition, local patriarchal customs and ideologies reinforce the idea that fishing is a male domain, working to strengthen male control of the technical means of production and fisheries wealth.

Women's future status in the harvesting sector is uncertain. It is likely that only low numbers of Newfoundland women will be eligible to become core fishers, because they do not own licences (or at least not the key ones) and they have shorter or interrupted fishing careers and thus less total and annual fisheries income. Core criteria often exclude women fishers, because access to fishing licences is limited to core fishers, but to become a core fisher, one must hold key licences. As in other North Atlantic fishing economies (Munk-Madsen 1998; Skaptadóttir and Proppé this volume), when fishing rights depend on ownership of fishing capital, a patriarchal dividend is upheld or created. Such capital tends to be the property of men, and there are no formal mechanisms to give women a say in how the property or rights are used. Munk-Madsen writes of the Norwegian fishery: "Men have received their fishing rights by building up fishing capital through their exploitation of common property resources and government subsidies, well supported by women's unwaged labour" (1998: 235).

Women's opportunities to participate in government retraining initiatives after the groundfish moratoria were severely constrained. Robinson (1995) argues that women were systematically disadvantaged in the allocation of funding and educational opportunities, on the assumption that they were unskilled, secondary earners. Women in our study area often did not take advantage of retraining due to home responsibilities. One female respondent, when asked about the programs offered, described her situation thus:

I must say, when the moratorium came on and they came up with those programs, it was ideal for younger people. But I couldn't see it, I honestly couldn't see it for [my husband]. I couldn't even at that time see it for me. Well, I was in my forties. First I'd have to upgrade to grade twelve.... And I did talk about going and [my husband] said, "Well if you want to do it, do it, but I'm not going."... And so what was I going to do, you know? Go and leave my kids?

While men are free, at least ideologically, to leave their families and communities to take part in retraining programs or find alternative work outside their communities, women have less opportunity to do so—especially those with young families (Davis 1995). While cost may have been a concern for both women and men, the prevailing gender ideology, with an emphasis

on “motherhood,” was an additional factor limiting women’s participation in such initiatives.

Neis et al. (2001) suggest that women fishers have had difficulty accessing fishing-related training—a condition for advancement in the restructured industry. The cost of professionalization training for fishers may be crippling if a household has multiple members in the harvesting sector. Most women fishers participate in the fishery through husbands or male relatives. If advancement requires formal training, and a household cannot afford to train more than one member, it is more likely that the man will train. Women’s domestic and child care responsibilities may also impede training, which, like the other criteria developed for the professionalization of harvesters, assumes that fishers are not constrained by obligations to a fisheries-dependent family.

The Resurgence of Discourses Supporting Gender Inequality

Agarwal notes that the consequences of women’s invisibility in policy and political decision making include increasing gender inequity in benefits and outcomes. She argues that “excluding women while including men could worsen power relationships and further disempower women” (Agarwal 2001: 1630). Some Newfoundland households appear to have dealt with the impacts of the fisheries crisis through intensifying existing hierarchical subsistence and reproductive activities, including reliance on non-egalitarian divisions of labour. After the collapse of the fisheries, many men spent substantially less time fishing or working at the plant, and some withdrew from the fishery altogether. As a result, some men respondents reported helping more with household work and domestic and caring tasks after 1992: “Well ... when she’s working, I’ll be home and I’ll cook dinner and cook supper and wash the clothes, you know? Just do a bit of the housework here and there and when she’s home she does the same thing.” Unequal divisions of labour may become more difficult to justify when men’s work and earning power are questioned. In some cases, female household heads became the *de facto* breadwinners, and husbands readily acknowledged their dependence on spouses’ wages, as well as the wages of other household members, to stave off the alternatives of welfare or outmigration. Indeed, fishers whose wives held jobs, especially in areas outside the fishery, considered themselves “lucky.” Nor did these men have any problems with women partners working for pay: “It would be better if she had a full-time job. It’d be number one then.” Yet despite some men’s acceptance of the shift in employment and income distribution in these households, women generally remained primarily responsible for all caring labour and household tasks. Men tended to explain away their increased participation in domestic work as a response to boredom and as temporary. Women seemed to concur with this rationale, because both men and women described this increased participation as “help,” underscoring its subordinate or temporary status. Indeed, men

tended to participate in these activities only when they could not find other things to do. In this way, men and women tended to avoid challenging traditional gender divisions of labour and hierarchical relations at home, rather than using the crisis as an opportunity to achieve greater gender equality at home. A few women appraised the increased time spent at home by husbands in a positive way. These women viewed changes in the occupation of household space as an opportunity for husbands and wives to enjoy time together and for men to establish closer family relationships and to lighten women's workload in the house. However, most did not readily accept changes in the occupation of household space and found sharing the same space with husbands difficult.

I find it terrible and I don't care who knows it. I mean it's stressful. It's stressful for everybody, you know? You're just in each other's way all the time and I'm sure there's everybody find it ... especially for somebody who's always been working. My husband's never been out of work, and I was never out of work, only for about two years, three years when the kids were born. Even then, when I was home he was working, you know?... and I think everybody needs space, right?

These women were accustomed to being on their own in the house, in what was ultimately considered their space. It was a space over which they exercised some level of control—or self-direction—in the absence of their husbands, who were fishing, working shifts at the local plant or simply engaged in unpaid male activities outside the home. They reported heightened levels of frustration after the groundfish moratorium because their husbands seemed to be always “in the way,” like another child for whom they had to care. Women held high standards for their own labour and were critical of men's housework performance; jobs done poorly by men were either repeated by women, or women spent additional time coaxing or training men through tasks. Clearly, this meant that women's work was extended to include responsibility for managing their husbands' activities. Thus, the household work that male partners did actually hindered rather than helped women in managing the home, and this did not translate into satisfaction for the women interviewed. Women who were no longer working found that doing “just housework” was terribly frustrating.

The loss of autonomy and control attributed to the presence of husbands at home reflects in part a gender ideology that attributes greater authority and status to male household heads. Women became less free when male partners were home. Although the women felt ambiguous about their domestic duties—resenting their assigned responsibility in this area but also feeling guilt when paid work interfered with their role as “good mothers”—they perceived their domestic labour as being more self-directed and more

independent of male control in pre-moratorium days when men were absent.

In response to this challenge to life at home, many women found tasks outside the home for their husbands to do. Some encouraged their menfolk to continue to visit male spaces or to be engaged in traditional male activities outside the home. Consistent with research on Nova Scotian fisher-families in the moratoria period—for example, Binkley (1996)—some men engaged in escapist behaviour, especially alcohol consumption, and withdrew from families, which exacerbated the financial strain on these households. But our research revealed that women actually made funds available to men in order to get them out of the house, despite the additional cost and caring labour this might subsequently entail. Although it seems unlikely that women respondents would condone spending money on excessive drinking, Morris's research (1984) on male displacement in the United Kingdom suggests that women may put much effort into making money available for their husbands' personal spending, under the assumption that men's and women's needs differ and that men need to spend time and money away from home. Agarwal documents a similar prioritization of income and household resource distribution for men's exclusive consumption, attributing this in part to a gender ideology that not only validates such activities but also empowers male entitlement. She writes that "perceptions about relative contributions influence the division of resources ... within households. Hence, the economic undervaluation of women's work ... can also affect their share in basic necessities" (1998: 69). In our case, this provision for male spending, while certainly reflecting the unequal distribution of, and entitlement to, households' resources, may also be a strategy that women use to get men out of the house and to take back female space. This strategy is indicative of female fisheries workers' difficulties in maintaining fisheries employment, their constrained opportunities for adjustment and their marginalization in the professionalized fishery, all of which reflect and reinforce (both ideologically and materially) their alienated relationship to the fishery and their attachment to the domestic sphere.

Patriarchal divisions of labour and state policies in Newfoundland reproduce notions of fishing as a masculine enclave and exclude women from the industry. Recognizing these constraints, women were well aware of their real life possibilities in local communities and households: "Like I got no hope to getting back to the plant at all," remarked one woman plant worker. In this context, it makes sense for women to prioritize men's attachment to the fishery. Women have fewer places than do men in which to secure meaningful and authoritative roles and identities. This is especially true of the post-moratoria period. It is plausible, then, that women support the construction of a male-dominated fishery and their relegation to domestic and caring work, not just to compensate for a perceived loss of femininity or to demonstrate support for husbands, but also to cope with the limited material opportunities presented to them. In contrast to

Porter's claim (1993) that subservient relations are counterracted when women work in the same environment as their husbands, women in this study are carving out spaces for meaning and authority, however limited, by investing in their roles as wives and mothers. In so doing, they help solidify the link between masculinity and fishing.

Conclusion

Drawing on a conceptual framework developed in Agarwal's research on northern India's forest commons, we have examined how resource degradation and the related restructuring of the fishing industry have affected the everyday lives of women in the Bonavista-Trinity area of Newfoundland, Canada. Women have been disproportionately hurt by the process of resource degradation, over which they had little control, and by neo-liberal economic and policy trends. Women tended to benefit less than men from government adjustment programs, and they were less able to keep fisheries jobs or to retrain or find new employment. These trends reflect women's concentration in processing work and Newfoundland culture's imposition of responsibility for child care and domestic work on women, which constrains their access to employment and retraining opportunities, especially those located outside their communities. State intervention—shaped by neo-liberal priorities of debt reduction, social spending cuts and deregulation—is encouraging the further privatization of fishery resources. Privatization and male-centred government adjustment programs have tended to increase women's identification with the household by limiting their other options. Current state-sponsored professionalization efforts are gender-biased, and the gender-neutral language of core and non-core fisher status hides the way that the criteria contribute to the marginalization of women in the harvesting sector. Neo-liberal state policies have exacerbated the effects of job loss caused by stock collapse, forcing some women back into the home and, in so doing, contributing to their poverty and vulnerability. At the local level, women and men tended to perpetuate the social construction of the fishery as a male occupation, in their efforts to maintain separate spheres at the levels of practice and ideas. During the 1990s, women's conformity to local perceptions of what it takes to be a "good wife" and "feminine" helped to shore up their husbands' male fisheries-based identities and to reconfirm their own femininity.

Our research suggests that in economies historically dependent on commons and resource extraction that have experienced serious resource degradation, gender ideology is tied to the material conditions of oppression—to "the political economy factors underlying women's subordination, nature's degradation, and their interlinks" (Agarwal 1998: 57). Agarwal helps us to understand that women's emancipation cannot be brought about without a change in women's material relationships to property and power. She stresses that "to be effective agents for changing their own situation ...

requires also the ability to challenge and transform in their own interest the formal structures that control natural resource use and abuse” (1998: 73). Agarwal highlights three aspects of women’s subordinate status which need to be effectively challenged in order for women’s economic and social agency and autonomy—especially that of poor women—to be fully realized: the gender division of labour, property rights and “jural authority and access to public decision-making forums” (Agarwal 1998: 68). Our research has demonstrated that the existing structures of political power tend to embody and reinforce social relations and values, failing to problematize unequal gender relations. Not only do resource management and governance structures perpetuate gender inequities, they also constrain opportunities for redress and transformation of these social forms. Current models used in restructuring the fishery place value on profitability and male authority, at the expense of basic needs, community survival and collaborative research and decision making (Sen and Grown 1987; Shiva 1989).

Agarwal acknowledges that many factors may work against women to constrain their capacity to translate their participation in public forums and institutions into egalitarian social change. Chief among these is blindness to gender inequity, reinforced by patriarchal notions of women’s economic rights and social value. The fisheries crisis in Newfoundland has largely perpetuated the unequal distribution of wealth and resources, both social and material, between men and women. It has also perpetuated and deepened the unequal distribution of wealth and resources between different sectors of the fisheries, with the companies and the large boats benefiting the most from the crisis and related restructuring. Our research points to the need for a “critical mass” mobilization by women in Newfoundland communities, so that the transformation of major social institutions can begin and more fully equitable and democratic means of managing and distributing the increasingly scarce fisheries resources can occur.

Notes

1. Parts of this chapter are explored more fully in *Power* (2004).
2. The island of Newfoundland and the mainland region of Labrador make up the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Until 2002, the province’s official name was Newfoundland. This study was conducted on the island portion of the province. However, the cod moratorium also affected many coastal communities in Labrador.
3. The Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (nafo) has developed geographical zones, or divisions, for the purpose of managing fish stocks. The northern cod stock divisions include 2J off southern Labrador, 3K on the northeast Newfoundland Shelf and 3L on the northern Grand Banks. These three zones are known collectively as 2J3KL (Hutchings and Myers 1995).
4. The interviews were collected for the Eco-Research Project at Memorial University, a Tri-council Research Initiative jointly funded by Canada’s Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Natural Science and Engineering Research Council and Medical Research Council.

Section Six

LAST WORDS

Gender, Globalization and Fisheries Network Statement

We, the women and men of the Gender, Globalization and the Fisheries Network, have identified concrete ways in which globalization has hurt women, their families, and coastal communities worldwide. Recurring themes that demand urgent action emerged from our research and testimony.

We include Atlantic Canadian fishworkers, regional, national and international researchers and community development workers from Canada, First Nations, Tanzania, Chile, Gambia, Iceland, Mexico, USA, Norway, Brazil, India, Vietnam, Nigeria, Cuba, Spain, Denmark, the Philippines, and Thailand.

We want to preserve the positive aspects of our cultures and heritage, and ensure that people who live in coastal communities have equal access, control, and preferential user rights of the coastal fishery. We insist that a clean and healthy ocean must have priority over the development of polluting industries.

Women have always played a crucial and active role in fisheries and in sustaining life in their communities. Yet, in countries all over the world, they have been largely ignored. Women's political decisions must shape policy and we need to put warm hearts into decision-making bodies.

We need to stop the encroachment of industrial and other destructive fisheries that deplete marine life. We reject large tourist projects that push people out of traditional fishing grounds and communities. Tourism should complement the small-scale fisheries of coastal communities, leaving gentle ecological footprints on our landscapes.

We are concerned with the way our national governments give up to multinational corporations their responsibility to protect citizens' rights and inheritance. These corporations control our resources and economies with insufficient responsibility to protect and conserve them.

We support the rights of aboriginal peoples to have access to the fishery. The costs of providing equitable access to the fishery must be borne by all citizens. In Canada, we also support the collaborative efforts of both native and non-natives to find ways to share the fishery.

During the past week we have been moved by the realities of technology's

destructive impacts on fishery resources and ways it is forcing fisherpeople into bankruptcy. It is also eliminating jobs and livelihoods in both north and south, and threatening the health of fishworkers. Technology should be designed to produce not only a quality product but also a safe working environment.

The concerns of coastal and rural communities must be central to government policy, fisheries management, and international trade agreements. Socially responsible policy would not abandon the health of our environments and people to unfettered international competition.

One of women's biggest challenges is to have our issues addressed within existing fishworker organizations and government ministries. This conference formed alliances and promoted networking among academics and people living in coastal communities. We have made a commitment to share information and ideas, making them accessible and useful to everyone, particularly those coastal community peoples who are struggling to survive. We commit to research that is ethical and responsive to the needs of coastal communities. We recognize the work and contribution of southern researchers, and together we aspire to create equitable south-north collaborative initiatives.

Our vision of a sustainable fishery is based on coastal communities where resources are cautiously harvested using ocean-friendly technologies. It also promotes an environmentally and socially sustainable processing industry. We seek an industry that promotes local food security rather than the production of luxury delicacies for a global market. Fishing families must be able to afford to eat fish.

St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, May, 2000.

Moving Forward

Barbara Neis and Maria Cristina Maneschy

In this chapter, we return to our general justifications for a book on gender, globalization and the fisheries. We also summarize some of the central themes in the book, identifying the substantial gaps remaining in our knowledge of these issues as priorities for future research. Finally, we remind our readers of the importance of developing alternatives to corporate globalization within fisheries based on “globalization from below” (Carroll 2001) and models where economies serve people, not people economies (Storey 2002).

Why Fisheries Researchers Need to Read about Gender and Globalization

In a recent special issue of *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme* on gender, globalization and trade, Lee-Anne Broadhead says it is “indeed time to re-state (even yell from the rooftops) the importance of a gendered approach [to globalization]” (2002: 179). In a world where most fish stocks are overfished, where there is clear evidence of severe overcapacity and failed management (Pauly and Maclean 2003), why should fisheries researchers devote our attention to globalization and, more specifically, to gender and globalization? First, overfishing and failed management are not the only issues that matter within fisheries. Others, such as food security, occupational health, social equality and human rights also matter. Second, trade liberalization and other changes related to globalization are central to understanding what drives fisheries to overexploitation and excess capacity. In addition, governments and international aid agencies are not continuing to support the expansion of large-scale fisheries simply because they are misinformed about the extent to which these are less economically efficient and more energy intensive than small scale fisheries (Pauly and Maclean 2003). Other factors including the relationship between politics and power and between gender, power and decision-making structures are also important.

Approaching globalization with a gender focus can help us tear away the “flimsy veil” of simplistic and circular reasoning that mystifies globalization, implying that it is inevitable and beyond our control (Broadhead 2002: 179). A gender focus also directs our attention to those who frequently bear the brunt of its effects, challenging claims that globalization is producing higher standards for environmental protection, improved incomes or better protection of human rights (Broadhead 2002). Research on gender,

globalization and the fisheries reminds us of the need to be skeptical about claims that de-regulation, Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs), the resurgence of factory freezer trawlers, the spread of intensive aquaculture and the development of patented, transgenic fish will “feed the world” (McMahon 2002). In such arguments, the “market imperative” for neo-liberal globalization is bolstered by a “moral imperative.” The ideological nature of these claims is supported by evidence found in this collection and elsewhere of the ways in which market liberalization and privatization are contributing to increased hunger, poverty and socio-economic inequality in many parts of the world. Following McMahon, from a gender perspective, these are part of a “universalizing, masculinist project that leaves people hungry.” That project also tends to culturally and politically feminize men and women in small fishing enterprises, as in small farming operations, by presenting them “as powerless, unproductive, dependent, locally embedded, and parochial ... inefficient, and non-rational in their failure to modernize or participate in [fish]-business.” (McMahon 2002: 205).

Why Globalization Activists and Researchers Need to Know about Fish

This book is not just relevant to those interested in fisheries. Scholars and activists involved in the globalization debates should take a close look at fisheries. As MacDonald (this volume) indicates, attention to fisheries has the potential to deepen our understanding of the relationship between gender and globalization. This is because the interactions between globalization, gender and environments are unusually visible in this sector due to its community base; because of the equally visible interactions between the gender division of labour in wage work, family production and domestic work; and because overfishing highlights the relationship between environmental degradation and market forces. In addition, a focus on fisheries could help reduce the urban bias in globalization research (Angeles 2002).

Alicja Muszynski, Nalini Nayak and other contributors to this book remind us that fisheries have long been part of international trade and have a long association with gendered and often racialized concepts and practices. The past few decades have seen increased mobility in fisheries investments and changes in the nature of those investments, as well as deepening emphasis on export trade versus subsistence trade in fisheries. Neo-liberal globalization is being fuelled by global trade and by the related policies and programs of legal and financial institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, as well as by sub-global regions of economic unification like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European Union (EU) (Angeles 2002). However, globalization is about more than trade. It is also about technological

and other processes that are increasing the capacity of corporations to move investments and jobs quickly around the world, avoiding taxes and regulations (Armstrong and Armstrong 2002). This speed and related de-regulation and re-regulation are contributing to corporate concentration and the relative power of corporations.

Historically, the fisheries commons were opened to competition and degradation through the development of *laissez-faire* capitalism and the linked processes of commodification, market expansion, colonialism, racism and technological innovation. In the wake of the devastation caused by the distant water fleets of factory freezer trawlers between the 1950s and the 1970s, fisheries commons were enclosed by nation states with the introduction of Exclusive Economic Zones. In many cases, the same nation states are now privatizing fish resources and marine, coastal, riverine and lake commons through the spread of joint ventures, Foreign Direct Investment, management systems based on limited licensing and ITQs, and the increasing dedication of many coastal and shoreline areas to corporate-controlled, intensive aquaculture, as well as tourist-based and other industries. Increased trade, capital mobility, privatization and corporate concentration have led to increased corporate control over fish resources and the wealth they generate. As a result, access to fish and fish products is now determined more than in the past by the market and hence by access to wealth. Contributors to this book have looked at the social, economic and environmental implications of these developments, with a particular focus on the lives and livelihoods of women in fisheries and on gender relations in the sector.

Laws, Policies and Programs: Gender Blind but Not Gender Neutral

This collection shows how in fisheries, as in other sectors, national and international laws, policies and programs are often gender blind, but they are not gender neutral in their effects. Industrial and government policies, as well as policies associated with new, international organizations like the WTO, tend to reinforce existing social divisions and inequalities. One example is fisheries management regimes based on ITQs that transfer the ownership of fish resources to individuals and corporations, disproportionately restricting the access of women in fishing communities to resources and to fisheries employment and wealth (Skaptadóttir and Proppé, this volume; Power and Harrison, this volume). Since gender reflects power relations, powerful interests are continuing the undervaluing of women's practices and concerns in most parts of the world.

A countervailing trend to privatization and corporate control is the rise of policies that promote co-management, particularly community-based co-management (Pinkerton 1994). However, such initiatives tend to be

confined to local, small-scale initiatives and to be poorly resourced from institutional, scientific and financial perspectives. Environmental policies, like the creation of marine protected areas and marine extractive reserves (Savard and Fraga, this volume), can potentially benefit male and female fishworkers in coastal communities. However, if these policies are gender blind—that is, if the agencies responsible for them presume a participatory approach and do not challenge existing class, gender and ethnic gaps in access to fish, employment and the wealth generated from fisheries—they could exacerbate existing inequalities.

This collection has devoted considerable attention to the gender dynamics of different fisheries management initiatives related to fish resources and fish processing. However, it has looked less closely at the relationship between such initiatives and globalization, and at gender and globalization at the level of corporate control and in relation to the changing monetary and legal frameworks associated with globalization.

From Trawl to Table

MacDonald (this volume) invites us to explore the gendered effects of globalization within fisheries by documenting its effects “from trawl to table.” Our collection has begun the process of exploring relationships of gender, class and race at different levels within the fish-system, as well as how they are interacting with globalization. However, this work is far from complete. To date, research on women and fisheries, and gender and fisheries, has concentrated heavily on household, community and industry/work-related interactions. Here, and in the larger literature, some fisheries like the Atlantic groundfish fishery have received more attention than others. There are geographical gaps in this collection; we have said too little about developments in vitally important fish and shellfish producing countries like China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia, the South Pacific, Spain and others. Less work has been done on gender relations in markets for fish, on relations between producers and consumers of fish, and on the way these relations are mediated by globalization.

Our work shows that with globalization, fish and shellfish have been increasingly commodified. Commodification invites us to treat fish as an object. However, paraphrasing McMahan:

A fish isn't just a fish, it carries in it, and into us when we eat it, a host of social relationships such as those with the people who grow, harvest, or trade the fish and also with Nature, not in the abstract but with particular nonhuman others, things, and individual places. When we partake in food, we consume relationships. (2002: 204)

The increasing commodification of fish and shellfish is cause for concern, because food is a necessity of life too often denied to vulnerable

groups (Storey 2002: 194). In a sense, globalization within fisheries, as in agriculture, is putting “subsistence trade and world trade on a collision course throughout the world” (Brownhill and Turner 2002: 169). In extreme cases, people are losing access to resources, employment and income in the formal market place, forcing many to rely on dwindling social programs in many countries (like Canada) of the North and on subsistence production and subsistence trade (particularly in the South) to survive.

For some groups in the South, including, for example, the dispossessed in Kenya, Brownhill and Turner (2002: 169) found that this shift has been associated with the valorization of subsistence trade as the basis for resistance and creation of an alternative society. Others rely resentfully on this alternative in a context where there is no land for the landless, no jobs for the jobless and, we might add, no fish for the fishless. Brownhill and Turner note gender differences in the way people approach subsistence production and trade, with women more likely to valorize it and support the skills and knowledge needed for sustenance trade. Future work on gender, globalization and fisheries would benefit from studying more closely the relationship between gender, subsistence trade and world trade within fisheries.

Neo-liberal globalization poses new risks to fish resources and their habitats, and environmental degradation is, to some degree, driving the transformation of fisheries and their gender dynamics. For example, overfishing and declining supplies in previously abundant species such as Atlantic cod are accelerating the development and spread of intensive aquaculture for these and other species such as shrimp and catfish. The privatization of coastal lands for aquaculture and tourism can lead to the degradation of local ecosystems, new threats to existing fishing and aquaculture enterprises and disruption of communities’ access to food and fresh water. They can also create new jobs for women and men, but sometimes such jobs come at the expense of traditional work rather than providing new options and alternatives. In some cases, the jobs don’t go to local people at all, but to “outsiders,” promoting tensions between working people in different areas and drawing attention away from the larger issues contributing to the vulnerabilities of local people and, often, the migrant workers as well. Angeles (2002) notes that trade often brings women into the labour market, but she reminds us to ask what policies would be needed to ensure that these women keep or enhance the gains in work and income they have achieved from trade. Armstrong and Armstrong (2002) point out that as many or more women end up working outside of the factory walls as inside. As illustrated by the contributions from Medard (this volume) and Maneschy and Álvares (this volume), they work in underground or informal economies, where they tend to be invisible and to lack protection, falling outside of regulatory frameworks and unable to access social programs for factory and other workers. We need to learn more about these workers.

The increasing importance of workers who migrate to find fisheries

work within countries and between them also needs more attention. Angeles has found that feminist research on global trade often ignores “the relationship between merchandise export trade and the non-merchandise or labour export that has enabled the movement of skilled, highly trained and disciplined work forces to high-growth areas and seasonal labour markets within and outside Canada” (2002: 37). This is true of meat, vegetable, fruit and flower packing. It is also true of fish processing. Some of the issues and concerns of migrant women shrimp-peelers within India and of Mexican women who migrate to the U.S. to process blue crab are discussed in this book. However, we could just as easily have looked at Canadian migrant fisheries workers who are moving between Canadian provinces or at migrant workers in the fisheries of Iceland, Scandinavia and other countries.

Both internal and external (domestic and international) migrants share serious vulnerabilities resulting from policies that constrain the rights and privileges of these workers relative to others working in the same industry (Sharma 2002). For example, as Sharma (2002: 18) shows, the Canadian government is “regulating (and exacerbating) a racialized and gendered labour market through processes of nationalization that position ‘migrant workers’ as a separate legal category of humans who are denied the services and protections available to those classified as ‘citizens’ or ‘permanent residents.’” Negatively racialized women in particular are not only being denied access to permanent residency but may be constructed as “*anti-members*” who would pose a threat to “citizens” if they were not so regulated.

We need to understand the relationship between neo-liberal globalization and the processes that are driving migrant workers to leave their homes, states and countries. In addition, Angeles invites us to ask how trade-oriented economic and labour policies are affecting working conditions as well as work organization, intensity, flexibility, gender hierarchies and labour management practices for migrant workers. Learning more about who benefits from the development of a migrant labour force and who loses should be a priority. In extreme cases, like the Philippines, migrant labour appears to have reached the point where the government of the country sees it as an economic development strategy and many intermediaries benefit financially from the trade in migrant workers (Velasco 2002). According to Velasco, fewer than five countries have signed the International Convention for the Protection of Migrant Workers and their Families (2002:133).

The corporate tomato research project involves Mexican migrant workers (Barndt 2002). As indicated by the authors, it is both feminist and ecological, in that it uses a broad range of feminist theories to make the experiences and lives of women in the food chain visible and because work and other lives are understood in terms of the relationships between the food chain and these women and nature. This project might provide a useful

model for future, focused work on gender, globalization and fisheries. Barndt (2002) and others have identified five interrelated dimensions of power that would also be relevant in fisheries work: North/South asymmetries, class, race/ethnicity, age and family status, and rural/urban power dimensions.

As with men, the vulnerability of women in fisheries is economic, in that it relates to the risk of poverty, hunger and unemployment. However, it also has “political, socio-cultural, technological, ideological, and environmental dimensions” that need to be documented and addressed (Angeles 2002: 34). Within fisheries, globalization means that more than goods, money and people are moving more rapidly around the world. Fisheries technologies, science and management paradigms are also moving more rapidly around the world, homogenizing human relationships with fish and the related environmental risks. These technologies and paradigms, and the people who sustain and operate them, bring with them diseases (human and nonhuman), exotic species and occupational health risks. The technological dimension of globalization refers to the development of transportation, communications and other forms of technology and the ways these are influencing the organization of work, consumption, the environment, corporate concentration and the marginalization of some social groups and promotion of others. All of these dimensions of globalization require more research.

Stock assessment scientists tend to follow fisheries around, rather than providing the scientific knowledge needed for the design and development of new fisheries (Neis and Kean 2003), calling into question the effectiveness of science-based management and increasing the risk of environmental damage and related social dislocation. Overfishing is one issue. A second issue is the growing distance between fisheries and landing ports, and between processing plants and the places where fish is consumed. This distance means that fisheries, particularly large-scale fisheries, are major contributors to greenhouse gases (Pauly and Maclean 2003). Investments in increasingly costly and energy inefficient fishing vessels draw fisheries wealth and, frequently, subsidies from government onto the water and away from households, communities and social programs. Fisheries that move rapidly from place to place and from species to species are associated with a pattern, as indicated by Díaz and Balan (this volume), in which health research and regulations to protect health too often follow industry rather than preceding it. This enhances the likelihood that workers will get sick and that they, their families and the host society will carry the social and economic costs of that sickness. Because the value of fish in the market place is affected by freshness, standardization of size, supply and quality, but not by the health of the workers or of the environment, it is not surprising that Díaz finds that the Chilean salmon aquaculture industry takes better care of the fish than its workers.

Globalization, Gender and Democracy

The legal framework for neo-liberal globalization can be partly found within international trade agreements like the NAFTA and bodies like the WTO. In recent years, such agreements have been instrumental in the development of new legal processes that are undermining national and international democratic institutions, replacing accessible, open and public processes with secret decision-making processes (Cohen et al. 2002). Presented as a series of new, improved international regulations designed to replace national, provincial or local jurisdictions, these legal processes are actually de-regulating industry and companies and re-regulating government and other entities. They are transferring legal responsibility for regulation from local, regional and national governments, many of them elected, to international appointed bodies. Women in fisheries, already marginalized within elected and appointed local, regional and national governance institutions, are even more marginalized within non-elected and non-transparent international organizations like the WTO.

Globalization, Intensive Aquaculture and Transgenic Fish

In this collection, we focus almost exclusively on capture fisheries to the neglect of the rapidly expanding aquaculture sector. Within aquaculture, we need more research on the association between intensive aquaculture and the displacement of coastal peoples, as well as its relationship to environmental degradation and to changing markets. Research is also needed on the gender dimensions of the association between aquaculture and genetically modified organisms. Scientists working on aquaculture are at the forefront of research on genetic modification in animals. Their work on the production of transgenic fish is moving forward rapidly, often with substantial support from national governments, including the Canadian government. As indicated by Forsey:

the issue of genetic manipulation touches multiple aspects of our lives—the safety and quality of our food, the health and stability of the environment, the on-going contest between the public good and private globalized corporate interests. Whether and how we as humans manipulate the stuff of life profoundly affects both the present and the future of our own and other species on this planet. (2002: 207)

Globalization and Value

Broadhead reminds us that international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are using structural adjustment and other programs to bring “the world’s various economies into line with the neo-liberal orthodoxy which is the foundation of ‘globalization’”

(2002:181). Benefits of these programs tend to accrue to those with resources. Women tend to be disproportionately disadvantaged in these arenas, where much of their work is not valued or is undervalued. Similarly, the values of biodiversity and ecosystem health tend to be disadvantaged as relationships become objects that only have value if they are bought and sold. However, when we use gender and environmental economics lenses to see the actual costs incurred by the “freeing of trade” and the move to establish intellectual property rights through patent laws, it becomes clear that “the corporate world view embodied in—and furthered by—the WTO and its view of ownership and property is distressingly short-sighted” (Broadhead 2002: 181).

The excesses of neo-liberal capitalism are particularly evident in the world’s fisheries. Patricia E. (Ellie) Perkins has noted that neo-liberal globalization is driven by multiple, mutually reinforcing processes including “overproduction, advertising, overconsumption, growing energy use and resource throughput, specialization, income inequality, mechanization, unemployment, social alienation, political and economic centralization, deregulation, trade, apparent economic growth” (2002: 185). The persistent, multi-layered crisis of Atlantic Canada’s fisheries discussed by Binkley, McCay and Power and Harrison (this volume) illustrates these mutually reinforcing processes. The crisis consists of:

a fish crisis, an environmental crisis, a community crisis, an economic crisis, a crisis of our development paradigms and science, and a crisis of governance. But the crisis has not been met by a multifaceted response. Consistent with the neo-liberal globalization agenda, the response has been an economic fundamentalist one which sees the solution in restructuring, “professionalising,” corporatizing, and privatizing economic relationships. This agenda is likely, in the long run, to worsen the fish crisis, the environmental crisis, the community crisis, the crisis of our paradigms and our governance. (Christiansen-Ruffman 2002: 59)

Some of the contributors to this book pay attention to tensions between the local social relations within which people live, develop their identities and experience access to resources, and the global processes that undermine some social relations while reinforcing others. Bonnie McCay’s chapter on the conflict within the Fogo Island Co-operative Society in Newfoundland, Canada, identifies tensions between the gendered familial, affinal and community-based social relations that have helped to protect access to resources, including jobs in this remote area, and the push towards social organization based on private property and individual rights within neo-liberal globalization. When the cooperative tried to buffer itself against the effects of capitalism and globalization by punishing women fish processing

workers for the economic choices of their husbands, this strategy was thwarted by a successful Human Rights challenge. In another chapter, Ragnhild Overå draws attention to a socially embedded local production system in Ghana's coastal fisheries organized around of the assumption of gender complementarity. Although this system mitigated against complete dependence on external actors and resources, it could not completely protect these communities from such threats as resource degradation.

Neo-Liberal Globalization and its Limits

Perkins (2002) uses insights from feminist research to explore the vulnerabilities associated with the system of globalized capitalism. Other researchers have identified two fundamental risks: the risk to markets of under-consumption of the goods produced by capitalist enterprises; and the environmental threats to capitalism found in resource degradation and the accumulation of pollutants. Gender analysis highlights two other threats, those associated with women's work and responsibilities within capitalism. These threats relate to the potential risks to globalized capitalism of a cooperation deficit and a resilience deficit.

Perkins defines cooperation as "the ability of the globalized economic system to maintain its ability to communicate, 'get along,' and organize its activities at a fundamental interpersonal level." (2002: 183). Increasing integration brings with it increasing complexity and, as the operations of global capitalism become more complex, the need for interpersonal cooperation and the risks associated with non-cooperative behaviour escalate. As Perkins argues, cooperation can "reduce wasted time, effort, energy, materials" and take advantage of the personal fulfilment that comes from working together. The resort to production teams, total quality management (Husmo, this volume) and other human resources strategies within contemporary capitalism is designed to address this problem. But these commodified ways of generating cooperation will be heavily constrained if people are not socialized from a young age in cooperation and conflict resolution. Much of this socialization work is the responsibility of women and social institutions like daycares and schools, which neo-liberal globalization undervalues and which are threatened by commodification and the erosion of social programs and communities.

Perkins defines resilience as "the system's ability 'to land on its feet' in the event of an unpredicted crisis or catastrophe" (2002: 185). She maintains that neo-liberal capitalism is eroding resilience at the same time as it increases the need for this system capacity. Resilience is undermined through the erosion of diversity and through increasing specialization, which make us more dependent on others who are often very far away. As a result, as economic and ecological collapses occur (local, regional, global), we not only lack access to key services but have also lost many of the skills, networks and means to generate substitutes. Overfishing, pollution, fishing

down ecosystems and degradation of benthic environments are threatening the resilience of our marine and freshwater ecosystems. In the same way, privatization, professionalization, outmigration, replacement of local fishing traditions, cultures and processing techniques and technologies by standardized systems, and of multiple markets by single markets, are all increasing resilience requirements for the fish-food system at the same time as it is being eroded within our fishing households and communities. Because of economic discrimination that makes women more likely to be “poor” than men, “women tend to face generalized economic risks earlier—so resilience is more important for women as a survival issue” (Perkins 2002: 188). Related to this, women are often active in the development of strategies and community-level organizations designed to facilitate collaboration and reduce risk. These skills that already benefit capitalism have the potential to buffer and ameliorate the effects of capitalism on resilience, and they should be supported rather than undermined.

Choices to be Made

As McMahon (2002) argues, we need to go beyond identifying the risks associated with globalization and beyond the issue of who is most affected, to explore alternative models for globalization. As we learn about those relationships, we can work from the local to the global to explore the complex networks of actors, practices and discourses that are contributing to resource degradation, discrimination, oppression and deepening social inequalities, as well as to organized resistance to neo-liberal globalization within fisheries in different parts of the world. We need to direct more attention to the ways international institutions like the WTO, IMF and World Bank are interacting with national governments to influence gender relations within fisheries. Globalization

is about processes that result from actual decisions and practice rather than about forces beyond human control. While there is strong evidence to demonstrate that corporations are powerful players that are often supported by governments, there is also evidence to suggest that there are both limits on this power and contradictory patterns. There are choices to be made. (Armstrong and Armstrong 2002: 49)

This collection documents both the negative effects of globalization and the creative struggles within which women are resisting globalization. Neo-liberal globalization represents one set of relationships among many possible alternatives. We need to imagine and fight for alternative sets more likely to sustain life and enhance justice (McMahon 2002). Food exchanges can build social relationships and reduce social distances, or they can undermine social relationships and increase social distances. Similarly,

governments can develop policies and programs designed to promote trade and rely on the market to achieve such social benefits as equality and environmental resilience, or they can work to actively strengthen social relationships and programs with the goal of promoting equity, health and sustainability.

Throughout this collection, over and over again in different countries, we find groups of women seeking out new income opportunities, including those for self-employment. We also find them organizing in support of their needs and those of their families and communities. In their struggles, they both draw on traditional “women’s” jobs and skills and enter new jobs and acquire new skills. We find groups of women creating new collective organizations or fighting for recognition as fish harvesters, processors and traders, locally and nationally. We identify some of the divisions within fishing communities and within fishworker movements and organizations. Such divisions need to be considered as we attempt to understand the way people and localities are affected by global processes and eventually react to them. As regulatory frameworks, property relations and ownership and control of fisheries are globalized, networks of social actors like fish harvesters, processing workers and traders are globalized in the process. Contributors emphasize how women and men in different contexts are coping with the new challenges created by globalization. They argue in favour of international networking and new approaches to organization, research and action.

Siri Gerrard and Nicole Power and Donna Harrison remind us that research is one face of globalization. Theories, methods and analytical frameworks and research-related policy recommendations have spread around the world, mainly from the North to the South and mainly from men to men. We need research that is more international, comparative and collaborative in its focus. We need it to draw attention to the social, cultural and ecological diversity that continues to exist within fisheries, as well as to the forces of globalization that both link and threaten local fisheries and the communities that depend upon them. We need to look for common meanings and ways to improve situations locally and globally and to provide fishworkers with opportunities to tell their stories and document their situations.

How do people and organizations confront trends towards privatization and the individualization of rights of access, as they are inserted more tightly into market relations and suffer from unsustainable fisheries and policies, regardless of the local production system? The present fishworkers’ movements and class formations involve very diverse strategies and are, in fact, a product of gendered subjects in particular communities. The links between these movements are not always clear or conscious. Research can try to understand such links and look for spaces for women’s participation. It can contribute directly to the activists and fishery workers involved, as

well as to public policy formation, looking for ways to articulate the demands and policy objectives of women and men in fishery-dependent communities.

Our collection contributes to the development of knowledge and understanding concerning gender and its relationship to globalization within fisheries. However, much more collaborative research and discussion are required. For the most part, as researchers and activists, we are still working in relative isolation, struggling to understand the changing options of women and men in particular fishing communities. Much less attention has been devoted to understanding how the gendering of options and experiences at the local level is linked to, but distinct from, what is happening in other parts of the world.

This book is proof that collaboration and global research networks can challenge the negative tendencies within neo-liberal globalization. It shows the potential for researchers and research networks to play a positive role in fishery communities and for researchers and fishworkers in the North and the South to learn from each other. Such collaborative forms of research can produce new and valuable knowledge, while at the same time acting as a force for change that will improve the situations of men and women in fishing societies and the quality of research in different parts of the world.

Contributors

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