Mast

Maritime Studies

Maritime Studies (MAST) is an international journal on maritime issues with a social scientific focus. It is a revitalized version of *Maritime Anthropological Studies*, which appeared between 1988 and 1993. The new name *Maritime Studies* (while maintaining the acronym MAST) is intended to signal that the journal is a platform not only for anthropologists, but also for scholars from a broad range of disciplines who are engaged in research on maritime peoples, cultures and adaptations, from an academic or applied point of view. MAST will be published twice a year. It welcomes articles, commentaries, research reports of work in progress, review essays, and book reviews on any aspect relevant to social scientific approaches to maritime studies.

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Maritime Studies (mast): An Editorial Reintroduction

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Between 1988 and 1993 mast (*Maritime Anthropological Studies*) was published twice yearly by the Department of Anthropology at the University of Amsterdam. It was an international and reputed anthropology journal on fishing and maritime communities that aimed to disseminate knowledge about contemporary and historical societies and cultures of people exploiting maritime environments. More than seventy articles appeared in its pages, covering a wide range of topics, theoretical perspectives and locations. Although primarily an anthropological journal with an emphasis on fishing and fishing communities, mast also published articles by authors from other disciplines, as well as on topics other than fishing.

Due to a number of circumstances, its editors (Rob van Ginkel and Jojada Verrips) decided to stop publishing the journal after its sixth volume. They felt it increasingly difficult to attend to all the editorial chores, at the same time acting as publishers, in between academic tasks such as teaching, doing research and publishing. They had to solicit papers time and again and keep subscriptions in good repair. Without the backup of an institute, the work became too burdensome, even though the editors took much pride in 'their' product and were loath to discontinue publication.

Many experts in the field appreciated mast. This became all the more obvious once it ceased being published. For example, in an article in *American Anthropologist* James M. Acheson and James A. Wilson wrote: 'The journal *Maritime Anthropological Studies (mast)* is now unfortunately defunct. In its short life, a large amount of good maritime anthropology appeared in its pages' (1996: 589). The journal *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian* even decided to prepare a detailed index to mast 'in recognition of the ongoing value of the collection, and to improve accessibility to its contents. Although publication of mast was discontinued, the issues continue to provide an excellent representation of articles illustrating the theoretical and research directions of maritime anthropology' (Hovde 1996:17). The author, Karen Hovde, deemed mast 'a journal of consistently high quality, dedicating the majority of its space to generally excellent articles by an international array of authors' (ibid.:18). She goes on to state that '[t]he research value of these subjects is not likely to become outdated. In fact, some of the topics investigated, such as political activism and legislation for indigenous fishing rights, management of community property resources, and changing women's roles in traditional societies, are at the forefront of research (ibid.).

Of course, we are in no position to disagree with Hovde's laudation. The editors could only add that mast dealt with some other subjects that deserve mention, for example contributions on chaos theory and on the impact of policy on fishing populations. In addition, they made an effort to let mast also be an outlet for scholars from the South and for controversial articles, for example on

whaling, and a platform for debate. The journal was also nicely illustrated with photographs.

The editors have always regretted MAST's demise and felt it left a void in the field of maritime social science. When asked what happened to the journal, they would say it was 'dormant', implying that one day it would hopefully be awakened. Though they have attempted to interest others to take over editorial responsibility, they were unsuccessful. They are well aware that it is no small deal to edit and publish a journal without a firm institutional basis. As soon as MARE, the Center for Maritime Research in Amsterdam, received financial backing from the University of Amsterdam, they felt that the time had come to resurrect MAST in a slightly different format. The name Maritime Studies (maintaining the acronym MAST as an indication for continuity) is intended to signal that the journal is a platform not only for anthropologists, but also for scholars from a broad range of disciplines who are engaged in research on maritime peoples, cultures and adaptations, from an academic or applied point of view. With this first issue of MAST resurrected, we hope to be able to give readers an idea of our intentions as regards the broadening of scope.

The issue contains articles by scholars with a background in anthropology, ethnology, sociology, history, development studies, and the EU administration. It covers such diverse topics as piracy, coastal tourism, canoe decorations, and methodological reflections on the uses of comparisons as regards the global fisheries crisis. The authors take us to various corners of the world: from Southeast Asia to Slovenia, from Ghana to Canada and India. The opening article is the thought-provoking keynote address delivered by John Kurien at the MARE conference People and the Sea (Amsterdam, 30-31 August and 1 September 2001). It is followed by two commentaries.

While the editors hope that the decision to broaden the journal's scope will attract a wider readership, they intend to maintain the high quality standards that characterized its predecessor. Of course, we need your support to do so. So please subscribe and submit your work to MAST. The editors invite articles, commentaries, research reports of work in progress, review essays, and book reviews on any aspect relevant to social scientific approaches to maritime studies. They would especially welcome cross- and interdisciplinary contributions, theoretical and methodological reflections and sound empirical writings concerning such themes as common pool resource use, traditional ecological knowledge, legal pluralism, multiple-use conflicts, integrated coastal zone management, maritime policy analysis, socio-cultural representations of maritime life, and maritime social worlds, lifestyles and occupational cultures. Undoubtedly, fishing and fishing cultures will be dealt with extensively in the journal, but the editors would like to emphasize that other aspects of the ways in which people exploit and relate to coastal and ocean environments and resources also deserve considerable attention. Therefore, they would in particular like to encourage social scientists whose research concerns, for example, shipping and shipboard life, mineral exploration and exploration, land reclamation, oilrig crews, maritime and coastal tourism, ocean and coastal environmentalism and so on to contribute papers.

You will find more information on how to subscribe and guidelines for

contributors on our website: www.siswo.uva.nl/mare. Two peer referees will review all articles submitted. Get involved and help keep MAST upright!

References

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People and the Sea
A 'Tropical-Majority' World Perspective

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Introduction

When the organisers of this conference contacted me, they asked if I could talk about the lessons that the North can learn from the South with respect to the issues about people and the sea, and, if possible, distil from this some items for a social science research agenda. I readily agreed because this would be an occasion to reflect on my experience both in the field and as a researcher. In preparation I reminisced about my years as a development activist, began rereading my diary notes, flipped through some of my research articles and e-mailed some Northern friends.

Putting my mind into reverse gear, my thoughts drifted back to that hot sweaty day in May of 1973 that changed my life. This was the day when I – person with a non-coastal, urban, middle-class upbringing – first set foot in an isolated, rural, sordid little fishing village in Kerala State, India. From that point in time, I then moved forward in first gear through my four years of unlearning and relearning in that fishing village and the neighbouring coastal tract. These four years resulted in a quantum leap in my understanding and appreciation of both people and the sea.

I read through the random diary notes I had maintained during this period when I was using my business management skills to help the artisanal fishermen to set up fishery cooperatives for more effective marketing of the fish they caught. These were the years when I perceived the enormous wealth that could be had from the living resources of the sea. I also experienced at first hand the paradox of poverty of the people that laboured to harvest and sell it.

I flipped through my own later research writings to see if there was something different about the way that I had analysed the issues pertaining to these matters. I discovered to my delight an article of mine titled 'People and the Sea' where I had pondered over the concept of a 'marine biomass community' and the 'seacosystem' (Kurien 1996).

I also shot off e-mails to close friends – all Northerners – who, in the course of the last three decades, have associated with me closely on matters relating to the sea, fisheries, and fisher people in the South. I urged them to reflect on whether they had picked up any special lessons that they thought worth mentioning. I received many precious thoughts, some of which I will share with you shortly. What I present before you today, in this largely non-academic manner, is primarily the result of weaving together material from these several sources. I don't think they are lessons. But hopefully, they may add up to a different perspective for looking at people and the sea

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Thoughts Behind the Title

I have titled my talk 'People and the Sea: A "Tropical-Majority" World Perspective'. Why have I chosen to use 'tropical-majority' world perspective rather than the more familiar 'South' perspective or 'Third World' perspective? It is because I wish to dispense with the familiar North-South, Rich-Poor, and First-Third notion of viewing the issue of people and the sea. While I may still use these terms in the course of my talk – for the simple reason that all of us have a somewhat similar understanding of what we mean by them – to me the more relevant dichotomies are of a different order. The first, rich, northern countries are located predominantly in temperate ecosystems and account for the minority of the people on this planet. The third, poor, southern countries are located predominantly in tropical ecosystems and account for the majority of the people on this planet. To my mind, the principle differences between the people-sea interrelations in these two regions of the world hinge on these two dichotomies and the way they are perceived.

I do not subscribe to any ecological or demographic determinism. Yet I think that when we reflect about people and the sea across cultures and space, we do not pay adequate attention to the crucial questions regarding *how we should perceive the specific role of nature or the issue of human numbers and their organisation.*

To begin with, let me state that many of the manifestations distinguishing the *initial differences* that existed between North and South – whether in relation to technology or economic status – can be attributed to these dichotomies. I will go a step further and suggest that the current problems associated with the *evolving similarities* between the North and the South can also be attributed to them. To me, this is one of the most valuable lessons that I have absorbed in my years as a development activist, and one which has served me well throughout my career.

Specific Role of Nature

Let me first illustrate the issue of the specific role of nature – the tropical-temperate dichotomy – with a puzzle from my activist days. I used to wonder why the design of the traditional fishing crafts was different along practically every 50 or 100 kilometer stretch of India's coastline. Why, despite centuries of fishing, has India not evolved a more uniform maritime technological tradition? Was it due to the insular nature of the coastal communities? Could it be some sort of 'resistance to change' conditioned by socio-cultural factors? Since I had observed that the Christians used rafts, the Muslims, dugouts, and the Hindus, plank-built canoes, I wondered if there was any religious significance that could account for the differences? My queries with the fishermen only yielded answers asserting that their respective craft design was the best for their job, or that the particular design in question was what they had been skillfully using for generations.

When I began my researcher days, I realised that I was not alone in having these thoughts. Though separated by half a century, I was in the illustrious company of people such as James Hornell, who had raised this issue at the beginning of the 20th century in his now forgotten treatise, *The Origins and Ethnological Significance of Indian Boat Design* (Hornell 1920). Hornell set out to examine the racial and cultural concomitants to explain the diversity of designs. Ultimately he correlated boat

design specificity more closely with factors such as coastal formations, seabeds, wave patterns, and tidal amplitudes. He also discovered that the prevalent designs of fishing craft in each region had remained virtually unchanged for hundreds of years.

Much the same can be said about fishing gear too. The tropical seas contain thousands of species, each available in small quantities amid a great degree of mutual interaction, competition, and dependence among and between them. To be productive over the whole year, a 'tropical-majority' world fisherman would need an immense variety of nets, traps, and hooks. Small in size, selective in harvesting, passive in use, seasonal in operation – these were the distinguishing features of these fishing gears. Basically, this was a case of creating harvest implements to suit the complexity and rhythm of the tropical seas.

Modern fisheries development experts from the 'temperate-minority' world considered these methods 'inefficient'. Why use such a plethora of specialised nets and boats when a trawler with a trawl net and a purse-seiner with a purse seine can haul in the whole lot of species throughout the year?

It is well known that numerous boat and gear designers from the 'temperate-minority' world have provided advice to many of the 'tropical-majority' world governments on upgrading fishing technology. However, unlike Hornell, most of these experts have either been almost totally ignorant of the practical realities on the ground, or have chosen to ignore the sobering ramifications which such technology transfers often create .

In a long e-mail message, Rolf Willmann, a fishery economist from the 'temperate-minority' world, says:

> Northern technology expert colleagues had some preconception of how to bring advanced Northern technology to benefit southern fishers. But they often failed and learnt the hard way that what already existed in terms of technology and practices was hard to beat given the various specificities such as climate, currents, seashore configuration and wave action, seasonal abundance and distribution of the multitude of fishery resources…. To develop an alternate appropriate technology was only possible, if at all, through close, continuous and prolonged interaction with the fishers.

Weren't the numerous failures around the world regarding the introduction of 'standardised' designs of craft and gear technology by international organisations and high profile consultants due mostly to their misreading of the role played by nature and the realities of the sea? And in cases which initially appeared successful, weren't the subsequent problems caused by these technologies also due largely to a lack of this understanding?

Understanding and working in concert with nature always has positive long-term dividends. This is a maxim that the labouring people of the tropical world took for granted and something that the first wave of modern development strategies chose to ignore.

Human Numbers and Their Organisation

Now let me take up the 'majority-minority' perspective – the question of how human numbers and their organisation is perceived. Coming from the 'majority'

world, large human populations as such do not worry me. In the 'tropical' world, milling humanity is an integral part of any ecosystem there. What gives me the shivers and results in goose pimples is the 'emptiness' of the 'temperate' world along with the sense of loneliness felt even when people are around. This is why I consider the majority-minority dichotomy realistic. However, my concern here is not with the lack of explicit recognition of this fact. Rather, it is with the *excessive and irrational* emphasis on the arithmetic *per se* once that fact is acknowledged.

Let me illustrate this with examples culled from influential 'minority' world writers such as the neo-Malthusian Paul Ehrlich. After a visit to India in the 1960s, he wrote the alarmist book entitled *The Population Bomb*. It is worth reading a long and interesting passage taken from his explosive treatise to make my point:

> I have understood the population explosion intellectually for a long time. I came to understand it emotionally one stinking hot night in Delhi a couple of years ago…. The temperature was well over 100 degrees, and the air was a haze of dust and smoke. The streets seemed alive with people. People eating, people washing, people sleeping. People visiting, arguing, and screaming. People thrusting their hands through the taxi window, begging. People defecating and urinating. People clinging to buses. People herding animals. People, people, people, people…. (Ehrlich 1968).

For academics and policy advisors like Ehrlich, Garett Hardin, and others of their ilk from the 'temperate-minority' world, our planet is inhabited by far too many people, each one going about his/her own activity in isolation. In their analysis, the basic problem behind the lack of development and the crisis of environment in the 'tropical-majority' world, is that there are too many individuals doing too many things. In short, there are too many hands to fish and farm, too many mouths to feed.

What I wish to focus on is not about this fallacy of the 'tyranny of numbers'. Today the views of Ehrlich and others – that human numbers *per se* are the main problem – has been challenged. It has also been disproved in specific country contexts. My interest is to focus on another dimension, one which I would like to call the 'units' problem. It pertains to the question of how we perceive the organisation of human numbers. Do we see these people as individuals *per se* or as individuals in the context of larger 'real-life' societal units or groups?

In the 'temperate-minority' world – though the family and the community may still be a unit of societal reference – the primacy of the individual within these units is supreme. In the 'tropical-majority' world, while the role of individuals is not denied, the unit of reckoning when examining 'people' issues is usually much larger. It is the family, the household, the clan, the caste, the tribe, and the community. Individuals are situated in these groups, but unlike 'coconuts in a sack' that do not interact with one another, in this case, they exist together in a 'relational context' where rights, duties, expectations, and outcomes are defined in relation to the 'other'. Individuals are socially embedded in a larger unit of reference. They attain their identities in relation to these groups.

This is particularly true when one examines the rural population that is involved in primary economic activities like farming and fishing. Economic interdependence is strong, but social and cultural interaction is firmer and more long-lived.

Self-interest exists, but it is not the overpowering motivation at work. The group or community of individuals, by their constant and intense interactions, evolves through channels of reciprocity and trust, mechanisms for communication and information-sharing on both the wealth and welfare of its members. It is this *inter-action* that gives the group or community the distinguishing characteristics, which cannot easily be identified with any *one or all* of its members.

Consequently, any development activity – whether in relation to the social, economic, technological, or cultural realm – which ignores the reality of the larger group context and focuses on the individual *per se,* may start out well, but is unlikely to be sustainable.

How many well meaning fishery consultants from the 'temperate-minority' world who have offered advice to governments and fishery sector stakeholders in the 'tropical-majority' world were totally ignorant of this real-life context of the 'units' issue of the organisation of human numbers? Take, for example, the growing awareness about the need to institute a system of property rights in fisheries. The popular prescription is to move towards individual transferable quotas (ITQs). Both from the sheer numbers perspective and particularly from the units perspective, such a solution to resolve access rights will be unworkable.

Rognvaldur Hannesson, the well-known 'temperate-minority' world fishery economist – an otherwise ardent proponent of ITQs worldwide – had this to say after he saw the 'tropical-majority' world reality in Kerala State:

> Fisheries in so-called northern developed countries, are large-scale (though not exclusively) and export oriented and single species or mainly fishing for just one species. These are the conditions most appropriate for ITQs. This is very different from the scenes I've seen in Kerala where large numbers of fishermen in small groups land fish from small craft, sometimes on the beach, and the catch consists of a multitude of species. I have serious doubt as to whether ITQs could be implemented in any meaningful and effective way under such circumstances… (Hannesson, e-mail personal communication).

Despite such sound advice, however, the official policy of many international development agencies still opts for such individualised systems of access rights. If implemented, it will have the same effect on the social system of the fish economies of the 'tropical-majority' world that the earlier introduction of trawlers and purse-seiners had on their ecosystem.

Whenever advice from the 'temperate-minority' world has been given to the 'tropical-majority' world on fisheries, it has often been based on a poor understanding not only of the role of nature, but also the manner in which society functions and resulted in major failures. Isn't this a reasonable conclusion? Francis Christy Jr., a renowned fishery economist and development adviser, is less charitable on this issue. He feels that:

> To a considerable extent in the past, the problems of fisheries in the South were exacerbated by misguided and damaging development projects from the North. This was due to two deficiencies in development aid: (a) an almost total lack of understanding

of the special characteristics of the nature of fisheries and (b) an insensitivity to the organisation of social customs and cultural mores of local fishing communities. The North has subsequently learned something more about the former factor but has responded generally by throwing up its hands and doing nothing, because it has not figured out how to provide the continuity of attention that is necessary. There are also some improvements with regard to the latter factor. In both cases, the North has much to learn from the South if it is to provide useful aid to the South on fishery (Christy, e-mail personal communication).

I have spent a considerable amount of time explaining my subtitle. Before you grow restless wondering when I will get on with the subject, let me proceed to sketch out the contours of a few themes that I would like to place before this august body for consideration. They arise out of the rationale of my subtitle and form elements of a larger social science research agenda for the 21st century on the broad issue of people and the sea.

THEMES FOR CONSIDERATION

Viewed from the point of the planet's resources, the 21st century will be the century of the seas. It will be the aquarian century. We will get from the sea everything that we got so far from the earth and more. Our grandchildren may consider renaming the planet as 'sea' or 'ocean' and the name 'earth' will probably fall into disuse.

In the Rig Veda (1500 - 1000 BC), the seas and oceans were considered sacred. Varuna, the Ocean god, was the one who upheld order. To the Rig Vedic people, oceans were vast and expansive: they were the providers of wealth; they bound the earth; everything flowed into them; they were full of energy, and; they were an important part of the climatic cycle. Writing nearly three millennia later in the 17th century, a famous Dutchman, Hugo Grotius, poetically portrayed similar concerns:

> The ocean, that expanse of water which antiquity describes as the immense, the infinite, bounded only by the heavens, parent of all things; the ocean which the ancients believed was perpetually supplied with water not only by fountains, rivers and sea but by the clouds, and by the very stars of heaven themselves; the ocean which, although surrounding this earth, the home of the human race, with the ebb and flows of its tides, can be neither seized not enclosed; nay, which rather possesses the earth than is by it possessed (Grotius 1916:37).

Just as we have begun to realise the importance of the tropical forests, we will begin to become aware of the ecological sanctity of the 'seacosystem' for the survival of the human species.[1] The similarities and dissimilarities of the seas and oceans which wash the coasts of our countries, and the variety of ways that people relate to them for livelihood and leisure, will become major negotiating themes in future. The recently published report of the Independent World Commission on the Oceans (IWCO) entitled 'The Ocean Our Future' conveys to the world some of these sentiments today.

What I present here, as themes for consideration, are by no means all-inclusive. They are restricted to the 'tropical-majority' world perspective and naturally to some of my own concerns with coastal communities.

STUDYING TRANSITIONS

Some wise sage has said that the only constant thing in this world is change. The notion of static social structures needs to be replaced with one where we envision dynamic patterns of change. The Chinese are a people that have had a thoroughly dynamic worldview and believe that change and transitions always bring with them both danger and opportunity.

The study of socio-cultural and techno-economic transitions is an area to which we must pay considerable attention in the coming decades. The dynamics of the multifaceted transformation that is taking place in the communities depending on the sea warrant careful documentation and analysis.

Let me illustrate this with the inter-generational transition that I have observed first- hand in the village in Kerala where I started my activist career. In the early 1970s, nearly all the working fishermen were illiterate. As Roman Catholics, they used the sign of the cross for their signatures. By all standards of reckoning, they represented the poorest communities in Kerala – a situation which remained even into the mid-1980s. I refer to them in a research paper as 'outliers' in a state known the world over for its high human development index.[2] Their technology was unsophisticated but required initiation from childhood for its use. They operated rafts called kattamarams with cloth sails and split bamboos as oars. The gear had many small and delicately designed cotton nets and an array of hook and line sets, used seasonally for specific species of fish. They fished very near shore and ventured out only as far as triangulation of their fishing position with appropriate landmarks was possible. What used to amaze me was the speed in which changes in gear designs, materials used, and fishing practices spread in the community. The classic example was the way Norwegian hooks replaced the Japanese and locally made ones, countering the 'resistance to change' theories propounded by so many technology diffusion experts.

A recent visit to the village to attend the funeral of a fisherman with whom I had been close provided the social occasion to meet together many of my old friends and their now grown children. Regarding the technological transition, one of them remarked:

> *Chetan* (elder brother), when you were here we fished with the *maram* (the raft) and *kambi* (hook-lines), now our children fish with enthrum (outboard motor), *vallam* (plywood boat) and *kambuter* (computer – the older generation's way of referring to the use of hand-held GPS instruments (V. Augustine, personal communication).[3]

This amazing technological transition was the result of the educational and social transition in the families. My friends had managed to educate some of their children, using state incentives won by their collective socio-ecological political action.[4] These changes were coterminus with the opening up of the Indian economy to the process that we call globalisation. Many of the curbs on capital good imports were removed,

which led to the introduction of new, improved beach-landing boats, small propulsion devises such as outboard motors, and miniaturized communication and tracking devises like cell-phones and hand-held GPS instruments. These new devices helped remove the exclusive dependence on 'learning-by-doing skills' that, for educated youth, were once barriers to entry. They also helped remove the 'stigma' associated with artisanal fishing. In fact, the introduction of these new devices has given a new respectability to small-scale, beach-based fishing, which is proving to be socially and culturally convivial and technologically appropriate to the 'tropical-majority' characteristics that we have described.

However, this rather rapid transition was not without some adverse 'side effects'. This makes the need for researching its ramifications all the more important. First, the older generation worked within a rubric of community rights in respect to resources, with a keen awareness of the rights and responsibilities of individuals. In the advent of the earlier state-sponsored fisheries development, this notion of rights was not legally recognised and the coastal waters were made an open access terrain. This resulted in a huge inflow of lumpy capital assets into the harvesting sector using technology that was copied from the 'temperate-minority' world. The present investments in the small-scale sector enter into an ecosystem already damaged by inappropriate technology use. Without a clear delineation of access rights, a context of excessive investment, over-capacity and higher costs prevail. The income distribution implications of this are worrisome. Second, there is a noticeable move away from the use of small, diverse, passive, seasonal gear (for specific species of fish), towards larger, standardised, active, perennially used non-discriminating types of nets.

What we see here are some of the problems associated with the *evolving similarities* between the fisheries of our two worlds that I mentioned at the outset of my talk. These factors, acting in tandem, can create a major crisis in fisheries; indeed, in some countries this has already happened. Here again I will quote Rolf Willmann:

> Currently, there appears to be a strong convergence about the lessons one can learn from the fisheries and fishing communities in both the North and the South: fishing is getting harder: there is less fish, there are many more who also claim some part of the coastal resources and marine ecosystem, there is water pollution and habitat destruction, and the costs of fishing skyrocket. The only solace of fishers is that fish prices, by and large, also go up…. (Willmann, e-mail personal communication).

The picture I have painted of what happened in Kerala is certainly applicable to a vast number of small-scale fisheries in the 'tropical-majority' world today. In a context of higher population pressures and shrinking opportunities for people outside the fishery, the choices of livelihood are increasingly limited. Consequently, measures that will promote small-scale, skill-intensive and science-intensive technologies that are appropriate to the nature of the 'tropical' seacosystem warrant emphasis. Equally important is the need to move from an open access regime and redefine rights of access for a 'new unit' of people – a group that can be defined as having a 'connectedness' to the sea because of their willingness to labour there.

Transitions are rarely smooth. Resistance and friction are inherent dimen-

sions of change. So too is the element of surprise. Transition studies are, by definition, dynamic and call for a far greater trans-disciplinary approach. Transitions take place at different scales and levels not necessarily moving in the same direction. Analysing the changes over time and space also warrant different research methods. There is a challenge here to equip social scientists to approach these complex, evolving realities differently. Transition studies also have very significant policy implications.

Multiple-Use Conflicts and Property Rights

The aquarian century ahead will bring with it new challenges for the people and the sea. The burgeoning population pressure present in the coastal areas and the rapid urbanisation and industrialisation of the landward part of the coastal tract, point to new opportunities, conflicts, and threats. It is far beyond my competence, however, to cover these issues in any significant manner.

To my mind, the aspect which will warrant careful investigation and research in the coming decades relates to the globalisation-spurred claims on the coastal zone and the consequent conflicts between users with historical (*de facto*) rights and those adopting new strategies to make *de jure* claims.

The new urban and industrial developments along India's coastline are illustrative of the new strategies being adopted in the 'tropical-majority' world for utilising the coast and the sea. They are the result of the liberalisation of the economy in response to the ethos of globalisation. A list of these new uses include: huge cargo ports; oil and gas refineries; amusement parks; desalination plants; ship breaking yards; military and defense complexes; nuclear power plants; sewage treatment plants; luxury seafront housing complexes; exclusive tourist resorts linked to marine sanctuaries and reserves; freetrade export processing zones, and; marine aquaculture enterprises.

Most of these new activities are in response to numerous factors. They include, *inter alia*: (1) global capital seeking natural resources situated in a context of less stringent coastal environmental regulations and an unclear regime regarding land and sea rights; (2) rich 'minority' world tourists seeking the visceral pleasures of nature in the 'tropical' world; (3) opening up markets in the 'minority' world for commodities and food produced by cheaper 'majority' world labour; (4) the changed security perceptions of governments about other countries in the region, and; (5) the altered, leisure-seeking patterns of the richer, urban consumers in the 'majority' world.

There are bound to be conflicts between the various competing interests involved in these new activities. However, our concern here is that these activities also conflict with the time-honoured use of the coast and the sea by coastal people long settled there. My focus is on people for whom access to the coastal lands and the sea are matters of livelihood, with very few other viable alternatives. Those advocating more intensive use of the coastal ecosystem have often argued that this is the surest way to absorb coastal communities into the 'mainstream' of the economy. The best empirical evidence in India suggests otherwise, however. In reality, these new investments actually have rather low labour absorption capacities.

There is even a more pressing issue. The new investors stake their claims for de jure property rights and get it, while traditional coastal communities are unable

to establish their unwritten 'traditional community rights' to the land they have inhabited and the sea on which they have laboured for centuries. The result is that coastal communities tend to become 'refugees' in their own homes. Re-establishing their rights must top the agendas of 'tropical-majority' countries.[5]

This opens a whole new realm of debate about legal pluralism and the manner in which these different claims to resource access and use can be resolved. How can new forms of community-based property rights be articulated, codified, and implemented? How can access to coastal (land-based) and littoral (sea-based) resources be combined to provide for a structure of overlapping diachronic, spatial, and resource appropriation rights to a set of multiple users with minimal negative reciprocal externalities among them? Some initiatives in the Philippines that examine the socio-cultural, techno-economic, and legal dimensions hold great promise.[6] This is an area where a lot more sharing of international experience across the 'temperate-minority' and 'tropical-majority' worlds, will augur well, keeping in mind the specific conditions of each.

Contours of the Community-Market-State Triad

The community, market, and state, have each – by themselves – played a major role in the interactions between the people and the sea. The writings and maritime expeditions of Thor Heyerdahl indicate that coastal communities in ancient times crossed the sea and made contacts across continents. The archeological evidence of seacraft of this bygone age also bears testimony to the highly developed craft construction technologies, knowledge of the features of the oceans, and the sailing and navigational skills of the seafaring communities of both the temperate and tropical worlds. All this was pre-market. Vibrant trade and the consequent development of markets closely followed these cross-continental cultural contacts. More recently, with the coming of the nation state in the 'temperate-minority' world, this intercontinental sea trade was accompanied by state-sponsored colonial conquests.

In the 20th century we have witnessed how ideologies that have stressed the primacy of state over market and community have risen and fallen. These dramatic events have brought discredit to the role of the state and neglected the centrality of the community in the economic and social well-being of society. At the dawn of the 21st century, we are now swarmed by acclamations of another kind - the overwhelming praise of the new magic of the market juxtaposed against the feeble voices that continue to stress the role and relevance of both state and community. Attempting to create yet another niche, we also observe today a movement that romanticises the centrality of community to the neglect of all else.

I wish to signal here the need for a community-market-state triad, the relevance of which, at least in the 'tropical-majority' world, merits highlighting. The autonomy of the individual, the household, or family, is circumscribed by the welter of both tradition (history) and aspirations (future) provided by the community. Using a maritime metaphor, the community serves as an anchor by giving people roots and stability that prevents aimless drift, and renders solace in times of distress. The market is like an oar or engine, providing momentum that can be modulated to respond according to the need for speed. The state functions as the rudder, giving vital direction as, and when, desirable and necessary. My contention is that we need

to situate the socio-cultural and the techno-economic components of the economy inside this triad if we want to create a convivial and sustainable relationship between people and the sea

What I would like to emphasize is that community, market, and state are complex social institutions with realms of influence of their own. However, they evolve both separately and also as a consequence of interactions between them. This means that none of these institutions can be described in static terms. They are dynamic and need to be constantly redefined. This process of redefinition and linkage is, by itself, a major function of social science research on issues concerned with people and the sea. Having spent time at some of the coastal communities in Europe and Scandinavia, I can clearly see that this proposition has relevance in the 'temperate-minority' world too. This is particularly true in the light of the increased globalisation and liberalisation of markets, and the withdrawal of the state from several of its earlier functions, much to the chagrin of coastal communities. It is also rather clear that in these countries there is a need to strike a balance between community, market, and state to design structures for fisheries management. In the words of Gunnar Album, of the Norwegian Society for Conservation of Nature:

> We are writing quite a lot on the need for the state (the resource managing authority) to use the community as a management tool and as an indicator for the success (or lack of such) of management. Our state is managing fish, money and boats. But the decision on how to fish, where to fish, where to sell, how to invest etc. is done by people in the social context of the community and family… it is the community (in a wide definition) that needs to be more active to take control over market mechanisms and initiative to legislation so that market and state can become trustworthy and predictable for the people who take the everyday decisions that influence the well being of the sea and its inhabitants - human as well as fish (Album, e-mail personal communication).

In the 'tropical-majority' world, we need to examine the issue of redefining 'community'. Until rather recently, the community was largely coterminous with a caste, tribe, clan, or physical village setting. The socio-political changes of the recent decades have made such associations less pronounced. The interaction with the market and the state in this process has also changed the contours of the constituents of community. In the 'tropical-majority' world, there are many people who often may not have adequate purchasing power to 'present themselves in the market'. The role of the state in modulating markets therefore attains added significance and signals the fact that 'the market' is both a political and an economic construct. As for the state, it is certainly not neutral or unbiased; it represents the interests of some elements of the community more than others. Yet at the same time, it is the only institution that has the 'autonomy' to claim to represent the interests of society as a whole.

I think the subject of community-market-state interactions is a very fertile area for further research, both within and between the 'temperate-minority' and 'tropical-majority' worlds. As a topic, it cuts across disciplinary boundaries and narrow analytical frameworks. I would flag this as a very important priority.

Trade in its larger sense, as indicated earlier, has been an important reason that people relate to the sea, both in prehistory and today. Here we wish to narrow our concerns to the issue of trade in the living resources from the sea and the bearing that this has on basic food security of people. The 'tropical-majority' world now accounts for the larger share in this trade and at the same time is home to the people in greatest need of basic food security. Does this pose a contradiction and conflict of interests per se?[7]

Since international trade is undertaken in response to market demand, unbridled trade can lead to a context where food security is compromised. However, *sustainable* international trade does not jeopardise basic food security. Let me explain. Sustainable trade will materialise only if it is juxtaposed between sustainable harvesting and production in the 'tropical-majority' world on the one hand, and sustainable consumption in the 'temperate-minority' world on the other. Achieving this requires committed people's participation at both ends.

In the tropical world, the specifics of nature have an important determining role in the dynamics of sustainable harvesting and production. As mentioned earlier, it presupposes certain kinds of technology and institutional arrangements. Small, passive seasonally-operated fishing gear and access arrangements can be devised with the participation of those who labour at sea. Sustainable consumption of the living resources of the sea in the 'temperate-minority' world will materialise only when there is a modification of the structure of markets and market demand. The challenge in this regard, is to move from a context of being market-friendly mass consumers towards the creation of people-friendly markets – markets which are concerned about how and by whom things are produced – and markets that place a premium on consumption which respects the rights of discerning consumers. Only strong and committed consumers' movements can achieve this.

There have recently been some much-publicized attempts to achieve this linkage between sustainable harvesting and market-driven consumption that we need to be cautious about. Initiatives like the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) where two multinationals act in unison – one which dominates the international fish trade and the other which moulds the 'temperate-minority' world's environmental consciousness – need to be viewed circumspectly.[8] Linking 'tropical-majority' world fishworkers' organisations and movements to 'temperate-minority' world consumer movements is the most appropriate approach to achieve this linkage.[9] Evaluating strategies for such linkages should form the basis for a major policy research agenda in the coming decades.

However, this is no substitute for careful, quantitative, diachronic analysis of process-specific and commodity-specific flows between the 'tropical-majority' world and the 'temperate-minority' world. Understanding the changing structure of trade at both ends is also a matter of priority. Viewed from the perspective of the 'tropical-majority' world as a whole, the pressing question arises concerning whose food security should be given priority – the poor fishing communities who stand to gain income from international trade or the poor consumers who stand to lose protein? How can we strike the right balance in this regard?

Governance has been defined 'as the systematic framework of social, economic, legal and political structures within which humanity chooses, and/or accepts, to manage its affairs'.[10] The way humanity has chosen to manage the seas and oceans has been an issue that goes back to early history and need not be enumerated here.[11]

In 1930, at the League of Nations Conference on the Codification of International Law, the 'bio-geographical solidarity' of the oceans was recognised as the basis for a new jurisprudence for the governance of the seas. With regard to the living resources of the sea, this was considered particularly relevant given that 'fish are internationalists' largely ignorant of jurisdictional frontiers. In response to this recognition, the remaining decades of the 20th century witnessed numerous failed and successful attempts to define various kinds of rights and responsibilities over different spatial jurisdictions of the sea. Some of these also resulted in defining and implementing appropriate governance structures.

Governance of the vast and diverse seas and oceans must necessarily be nested – multi-tiered and overlapping. The *res nullius* status of the seas is a concept of the past. The global, regional, national, and local levels attain their own special significance depending on the nature of the resource or the ecosystem service which people intend to use from the aquatic terrain. The seas and oceans viewed as carbon sinks warrant a global perspective. The use of waves for generating electricity calls for local specificity. Harvesting fish needs a multi-layered approach from the local to the global.

The macro trend of globalisation and the counteracting micro trend of localisation (for example in the form of decentralisation of governance) in many 'tropical-majority' world countries give rise to the need for new approaches to governance at both levels. It also implies that there is a need for appropriate contemporaneous action at both levels – what the business world today calls 'glocalisation' (global and local). However, what is important to note is that these are also the two levels where the apparatus for governance – whether by state or civil society – is at its weakest. It is at the mezzo level – at the realm of nation state – that the governance structures and the relevant institutional arrangements are well laid out. I am alluding here to the UNCLOS Treaty and the concomitant national laws pertaining to the governance of the Exclusive Economic Zones and realms within it.

At the macro-global (and regional) levels there are numerous conventions and treaties that have a bearing on different aspects of the use of the sea as a 'tap' for resources or as a 'sink' for wastes. Their effective implementation is the major bone of contention. At the micro-local levels the trend towards village-level governance – the *panchayat, barangay, or desa*, as it is called in some 'tropical-majority' world countries – generally stop at the beach and do not normally consider the possibility for moving seaward.

What we have mentioned above is the nation state (and multi-nation) driven *governing* apparatus which has fairly rigid legislative instruments and command-and-control mechanisms at their core. Whether all the future governance choices before humanity at different levels can be expressed through these structures alone is questionable.

We are witness today to collective public action by civil society at all the

levels. At the global level, it takes the form of transnational, multi-national segments of civil society who share a certain degree of 'moral similarity' which defines their collective identity. Moreover, there is no need for these groups to have unanimous agreement, cultural homogeneity, or coercive unity, as the growing 'protest movements' against the World Trade Organisation (wto), the International Monetary Fund (imf) and the World Bank (wb) aptly demonstrate. Other examples include the various international networks of associations and organisations relating to issues of mangrove protection, shrimp aquaculture, fishworkers' and fisherpeople's rights. At the mezzo level of the nation state, there are increasing pressures on governmental structures by both adversarial and collaborative stakeholder groups and non-governmental organisations. On matters relating to the utilisation of coastal resources in 'tropical-majority' countries, such pressures are on the increase. The micro-local level is also replete with the upward evolution of diverse expressions of participatory public action by 'face-to-face communities'.

Can these civil society actions coalesce into intra-level and cross-scale interactive structures of governance? What is the nature of the linkages that these civil society actions can and should establish with the nation state and multi-national structures of governance? Will such cross-scale interaction help to widen the definition of problems and opportunities, enhance the relevance and reliability of intra-level assessments, change the analysis of causal factors and response options, and alter the nature of 'plausible futures' that are envisioned for people's relationships to the sea?

The dilemmas as well as the opportunities before humanity on issues relating to the sea – a few of which we have enumerated above – call for greater participatory responsibilities where the various stakeholders jointly create institutional arrangements (rules and norms) for effective governance. This is a complex and evolving engagement that is at once socio-cultural, economic, and political. Envisioning research strategies for understanding this is a major research challenge.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COOPERATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Finally, I would like to say a few words about international research cooperation that is bound to increase in the years ahead. I will end my talk with a brief reflection on the social sciences.

The organisers of this conference talk about 'an agenda' for the 21st century in maritime research in the social sciences. I will be charitable enough to grant that they wish to chart a 'new agenda' and not add items to the old one. However, there are some current realities that we must recognise before we can successfully forge ahead. It may be appropriate to enumerate what these realities are so that we can come to terms with them. First, the most important is undoubtedly the question of funds. The 'temperate-minority' world is the main source of international research funding. Second, the research agendas are dominated by the paradigms of the funders. Third, most of this international funding is for research to be undertaken by researchers from the 'temperate-minority' world in the 'tropical-majority' world.

Can a *new* agenda for maritime research in the social sciences into the 21st

century be undertaken if these current realities continue unabated? My own answer is an emphatic 'NO', and I believe that we should use this important conference as a springboard for renewing our commitment to thinking afresh about the ways that we can move slowly, but steadily towards a more multi-dimensional and truly participatory approach on all counts.

The issue of funding will be a difficult one to tackle. The fact of the matter is that the economies of the 'temperate-minority' world have historically accumulated a surplus of funds, which will always work to their advantage. In short, we start from an 'uneven playing field'. I also recognise that many institutions and researchers in the 'tropical-majority' world are not able to tap financial resources from their own countries particularly for social science research. Yet I am personally unwilling to accept the proposition that those who accompany the hard cash must also automatically 'call the tune'. Research funds must function as the lever to unearth the vast storehouse of knowledge. They must not become the vehicles to appropriate it.

We must be in a position to think of a Research Contribution Parity (RCP) index whereby the time and services of all persons in an international research project can be factored on the same basis for commensurate services and expertise. This will provide a more balanced picture of the real contribution of researchers from the 'tropical-majority' world in international research projects. This is an area that has not been adequately addressed so far.

In the 'majority' world, there is a considerable amount of first-rate social science work on issues relating to people and the sea. Institutions and researchers there undertake the funding, set the agenda, and provide the physical realm of research. 'Majority' world publishers and journals then disseminate the results. Unfortunately, very little of this work is recognised or cited in the maritime research circles in the 'minority' world. An honest attempt to set a new research agenda must take stock of this unrecognised research. This may also call for selective capability building to provide research results with the language flair and other trappings needed for recognition in the 'minority' world.

Every researcher, particularly from the 'temperate-minority' world, should be encouraged to understand issues relating to people and the sea in their own backyards before they become experts about what happens elsewhere. I also support the creation of contexts where more social science research is undertaken in the 'temperate-minority' world by researchers from the 'tropical-majority' world. This sort of 'reverse collaboration' is an important way of imbibing new perspectives, particularly about the role of nature and the issue of understanding how people function in different socio-cultural environments.[12]

I realise that what I have said may sound like wishful thinking. This is, indeed, the case as today we move increasingly towards a model of competitive market bidding for social science research funds. This strongly reinforces the existing disparities between our two worlds in this domain. The discussion of research partnerships between institutions in the 'tropical-majority' world and the 'temperate-minority' world all too often is merely gloss, because 'bidding conditionalities' warrant the token presence of a few blacks and browns.

But all is not lost. I can mention a very noteworthy example that takes a fresh approach to all the aforementioned issues. It is an initiative from this country: the

Multi-Annual and Multi-Disciplinary Research Programme (MMRP) of the Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS).[13] It forms part of an international research programme directed towards building research capacity in the 'tropical-majority' world and differs significantly from other donor-supported research programmes in the following aspects:

- There is a long-term commitment to support research in the 'majority' world countries;
- Each such country programme places emphasis on the process itself, rather than on projects per se;
- Responsibility for agenda setting and implementation is left to autonomous bodies in the 'tropical-majority' world, placing considerable confidence in local leadership;
- The DGIS restricts its role to one of facilitator.

Such examples, though they can now be counted on your fingers, provide hope that all the fanfare about new agendas and new approaches are not just old red wine in new green bottles!

This conference is intended to celebrate the establishment of the Centre for Maritime Research or MARE. The aim of MARE is to collect, advance, and apply scholarly knowledge on the relationship between humankind and the marine and coastal environments. MARE hopes to take a worldwide perspective and promote comparative regional analysis. It is probably in order then, that I conclude with a reflection on social sciences.

Social science in its broadest sense is an ordered enquiry about some aspects of social reality. It has a language of communication which its practitioners create in their efforts to understand and explain some aspects of a complex and evolving reality. This therefore calls for setting aside the postulational method and its emphasis on *a priori* reasoning as the basis of social knowledge. Alternatively, it calls for understanding and appreciation – empirical and intuitive – of the actual social reality before moving to levels of abstraction, which are required for a more systematic study of this reality. The nature of abstraction required to understand a relationship between people and the sea, which is primarily at the level of subsistence and survival (as in the 'tropical-majority' world), will differ from what is required where the relationship is more for leisure and enjoyment. Sensitivity to these differences and a grasp of their rationale are necessary prerequisites for assuring the relevance of social scientific enquiry in future.

People and the sea the world over are similar in many respects; this is what makes social science *possible*. People and the sea are also different in many respects: this is what makes social science *necessary*. There are still many areas of ignorance both with regard to the similarities and the dissimilarities. Therefore, we should not be too self-satisfied about our current stocks of knowledge. I believe that fashioning more nuanced maps to identify and address these areas of ignorance is the best approach to begin this new phase of research. This is the main challenge before all of us here and the one that I hope MARE will take up and lead in the 21st century.

Notes

[1] The role of the sea, particularly the continental shelves, for sustaining life on earth has been highlighted by James Lovelock (1987).

[2] See Kurien (2000a).

[3] It is interesting to note that in India today, even among the so-called deep sea fishing vessels only few use GPS instruments.

[4] I analysed the political ecology of fisheries in Kerala, highlighting how the fishworkers were able to change the investment and social welfare priorities of the state through collective action (see Kurien 1992)

[5] The efforts undertaken in Kerala State, India, can be found in Kurien (2000b).

[6] A recent workshop held in the Philippines on 'Marine and Coastal Resources and Community-based Property Rights' addressed these issues from a theoretical and practical policy oriented perspective.

[7] I have attempted to examine some of the relevant issues in Kurien (1998a).

[8] A debate on this initiative is contained in a collection of articles in a publication of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) (see ICSF 1998).

[9] See for an an example of this fishworker- fish consumer linkage at an international level Kurien (2000c).

[10] This is the definition used by the World Humanity Action Trust (WHAT), that recently constituted a Commission on Fisheries Resource which, in turn, produced the report 'Fishing for the Future' (WHAT 2000).

[11] A very brief treatment of this can be found in Kurien (1998b).

[12] I have personally benefited from such 'reverse collaboration' with a recent visit to Iceland accompanied by the economist Rognvaldur Hannesson with financial support from the World Humanity Action Trust in the UK (see Kurien 2000d).

[13] One of these programmes is situated at the Centre for Development Studies, Kerala, India. Others operate in Vietnam, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Mail, Uganda and Egypt.

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International Partnerships for Sustainable Futures for the People and the Sea – from Knowledge to Action

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Introduction

When listening to John Kurien's keynote address at the MARE Conference, his thoughtful, sometimes passionate, words elicited a number of mixed thoughts in my mind. Some elements of his historical perspective provide useful guidance for addressing serious gaps in the way conventional fisheries science and economics have concerned themselves with the issues of sustainable futures for the people and the sea. At the same time, the defensive nature of the overall framework with its predominance of a 'donor-recipient' perspective is too limiting for the challenge at hand. That notwithstanding, it certainly had great merit in making us all think about how we want to structure our relationships in the future and what may be suitable approaches to study some of the highly pertinent questions he raised in order to provide direction for future lines of research.

There is Only One World

The relations between human societies, the ocean and fisheries reach back into the early days of recorded history. Collet (1991) has been among those laying the foundations for rigorous study of maritime civilisations with a demonstration that earlier classifications and analytical frameworks may have overlooked or misinterpreted essential features of their characteristics and dynamics. Today's dichotomy between 'northern' approaches to fisheries putting emphasis on technology and efficiency and 'southern' approaches favouring labour and less capital-intensive production may have more to do with the relative abundance of production factors steering historical pathways than with an *a priori* multiplication of 'worlds' on the only planet humankind has at its disposal – at least so long as space exploration has not generated realistic alternatives. Both capital-intensive and labour-intensive exploitation strategies have managed to deplete the natural resource base on which their future wellbeing depends, as for example Pauly *et al.* (1998) showed with their analysis of the global 'fishing down marine food webs'. Moreover, between one fourth and one third of all primary production have been estimated as already necessary to support fisheries on continental shelves (compared to earlier global estimates of only 2 percent), where industrial and small-scale fisheries are concentrated in temperate and tropical oceans (Pauly and Christensen 1995).

 Intensified by the up-scaling of international trade, exchange and interdependence between societies is greatly increased today, this should be taken as an argument for enhanced co-operation within and between societies, not as an autom-

atism for antagonism. This is not to diminish real differences in approach born out of cultural, socio-economic, environmental and climatic conditions. Plurality of conditions warrant differentiated analysis and response, but analysis in separated 'world' frameworks underestimates their interconnectedness and may distract from the need to co-operate more in the future.

Partnerships Between Equals

Likewise, the strong emphasis on relations governed by donor-recipient style perceptions and behavioural patterns focuses the outlook onto differences of financial resources instead of sufficiently highlighting the wealth of accumulated knowledge in age-old cultures in different parts of the world. Insisting on boundaries instead of on commonalities does little to promote comparisons and joint learning, which broadens the cognitive base (Sen 2000) and can build the trust necessary to open new perspectives and options towards sustainable futures for all human societies.

Such a perspective goes well beyond transfers, whether technological or financial. Indeed, as early as 1979, in the occasion of the UN Conference for Science and Technology for Development, developing country representatives objected to simple transfers, which are never neutral to any given context, and instead demanded scientific cooperation on equal footing. In response, the European Commission established, as of 1983, a programme for science and technology for development. During the 20 years of its existence and evolution, it has mobilised thousands of teams from developing partner countries and the European Union, based on voluntary cooperation among scientific institutions, mutual respect, shared benefits and responsibility. Funding decisions are taken after competitive peer review by scientists from around the world and subsequent assessment, by developing country science managers, of the best scientific proposals for relevance for promoting sustainable development.

Successive editions of this international scientific cooperation programme (STD, then INCO) have learnt from the focus on adapted technology in the early days that this was necessary, yet insufficient to address the challenge for a transition towards sustainable development. Thus, policy and management oriented research were added as of the early 1990s to develop concepts which could help operationalise the broad principles enshrined in such international frameworks as Agenda 21 adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The thematic coverage kept a focus on basic concerns of sustainable food production in harmony with the natural resource base, including marine resources, and health and equitable socio-economic conditions in human societies (Nauen 2002).

From Knowledge to Action

Successive industrial revolutions have revealed the intricate relationship between transitions in human societies and technological breakthroughs. Fishing as a subset of socio-economic activities was also deeply affected by these changes. These were mediated in a variety of ways with international trade acting as one of the major

driving forces in accelerating change.

There is now growing recognition of the critical role of knowledge and human and institutional capital (as many economists chose to call it) for the ability of human societies to mobilise their potential for understanding and managing this change. For a transition towards sustainable development must involve maintenance or restoration of natural capital, economic viability and social equitability (Holling 2000). Scientific partnerships are a valid contribution to this objective as they develop all three dimensions, knowledge, human and institutional capital.

However, communication between researchers and major societal actors (from government and private sector to various representatives of civil society involved in fishing and coastal activities) tends to be limited, though John Kurien's and the International Collective in Support of Fishworker's own activities were among notable exceptions. This explains at least partially why comparatively little of the rich scientific literature and diverse local knowledge embedded in maritime societies gets exchanged and influences public policy in fisheries and aquaculture, let alone using it in the context of conventional aid projects.

Some existing sources of information and strategies for providing the best available knowledge on aquatic resources and their use by humans from different knowledge systems and across linguistic barriers are presented and discussed in Feoli and Nauen (2001). Creating crossroads of knowledge, new approaches to knowledge creation and joint learning and developing entire innovation systems around such platforms seem among the most promising ways to address the key issues highlighted by Kurien and others.

These opportunities and challenges require mobilisation and organisation of knowledge, learning and action both in industrialised and developing countries on a broad front. This should allow concurrently to
- combine the environmental, socio-cultural and economic dimensions of the relationship people have to the sea and its resources;
- enable inter-disciplinary networking around the principal themes identified and also incorporating existing networks;
- build bridges between the different types of partnerships involved.

The setting up of a platform of partners creates an open and permanent dialogue space with the ability to interface transdisciplinary research, private sector in different configurations, local and national administrations and civil society in various articulations. Mobilising the strengths of these different partners synergistically should ensure stronger links from knowledge to action and address equitability issues and restoration of the resource base in a more pro-active way.

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Better Yet, a Global Perspective?
Reflections and Commentary on John Kurien's Essay

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John Kurien serves up a banquet of food for thought regarding future agendas for fisheries science, development, and management in this new millennium. Making his observations from mainly a 'tropical majority' perspective, he offers a note-worthy counterpoint to the hegemonic 'temperate minority' perspectives that are so prevalent nowadays in fisheries science, development, and management-policy discourse. As such, nearly all his food is palatable, well prepared, and well laid out.

A Problematical Dichotomy

On the other hand, I have some problems with his 'tropical majority' versus 'temperate minority' dichotomy. In many respects, his essay does not articulate these into a whole that might be perceived as being greater than the sum of its two parts. As such, this analogy becomes rather overdrawn, leading us away from a new aspect of the contemporary world: that globalization is proving to be an interactive process that in many ways is blurring the old dichotomies of North/South, Rich/Poor, First-World/Third-World – or even Temperate/Tropical.

To some extent this is not his fault, since, as he says in his Introduction, the organizers of the conference where his essay was to be the keynote invited him to 'talk about the lessons that the North can learn from the South'. This was his charge and in addressing it he acquitted himself splendidly. Yet, by the end a reader is still left with his dichotomous perspective, one which I feel is an over-simplification of the contemporary global reality, because ultimately it describes only a subset – albeit a very large one – of this larger, more complex, and dynamically-changing reality.

Not that we should reject his dichotomy, because indeed what he has striven to do is *add nature* to the discourse about the traditional dichotomies. Thus he has underscored that North/South, Rich/Poor, First-/Third, et cetera, are situated in very different physical environments, that these differences have important implications for their subsequent development and overall social, cultural, and economic attributes, and ultimately the majority of humanity that is involved in fishing is situated in tropical regions.

Being situated in a particular type of ecosystem, he stresses, prompts the development of certain solutions to problems of social and economic organization, as well as decisions regarding fishing methods, fishing technology, and processing and marketing arrangements. Over time, he implies, these solutions become instituted in fishing societies after considerable experimentation, becoming their successful adaptations – the ones that are 'appropriate' in and for their milieu. Tragically for many in the 'tropical majority', he then notes, these solutions have often been ignored and

disrupted by science, development, and management efforts originating among the 'temperate minority'. His lesson here may be an old one, one that many have articulated previously in various forms beginning nearly five decades ago. But it still merits repeating, especially in view of the seeming heedlessness of it in so many fisheries science, development, and management-policy making contexts these days.

A Necessary Correction

Putting aside my reservations about this dichotomy, I feel there is another more serious flaw in his presentation that requires more decisive correction. It has to do with the implicit idea that among much of the 'tropical majority' there is an inherent wisdom in their approaches to fishing and fisheries management – again, which is distilled from long experience – suggesting they might institute wiser approaches to the conservation and sustainability of the marine resources they depend upon if only the 'temperate minority' would leave them to do so. Thus, I feel he turns a blind eye to the historical record going back for several millennia. It shows how fishing people from *both* the 'temperate minority' and 'tropical majority' regions have single-handedly depleted the marine resources they depended upon. This is something I went to great lengths to document in my book, *Crisis in the World's Fisheries,* by providing numerous illustrations of how various people at various times *in all regions of the world* have made this fundamental mistake, and still continue to do so (see McGoodwin 1990, especially chapter 3).

Contrary to what I think Kurien is implying, I concluded that sustained marine-resource availability among many pre-industrial and pre-modern people was often not attributable to any conscious intention or design, and neither to any virtue inherent in their traditional societies *per se*. Rather where marine resources seemed to have been sustained over long periods of time it was often merely the result of low human population levels, correspondingly low demands placed on marine resources relative to their availability, and the possession of only rudimentary harvesting technologies. Indeed, when any of the foregoing factors changed, depletion often quickly followed.

Thus, the 'tropical majority' – both in antiquity and up through the present – cannot be exempted from responsibility for marine-resource depletions. To hold otherwise is to perpetuate an unwarranted and romanticized view of traditional fishing communities, a view that unfortunately has reached nearly mythical proportions in some of the social-science literature, and ultimately a view that is at odds with the historical facts. Moreover, perpetuating this myth can do a disservice to the creation of more effective fisheries science, development, and management policies – for all fishing people, wherever they are to be found.

Another Matter Meriting Some Underscoring

Another problem not found on Kurien's banquet table, yet which has great potential impact on all the world's fishing people, also merits underscoring. It is the rapid

global environmental change – in addition to the increasing pollution of marine ecosystems – that is being increasingly seen in various fisheries in recent years. True, the 'temperate minority' may be implicated in causing an undue share of these problems, but otherwise hardly any nation can disqualify itself as a contributor to them these days. Thus, the global character of these problems must be acknowledged, and a global community must work together in concert to address its members' mutual concerns.

Globalization, for Worse and for Better

I also think Kurien's essay falls short on coming to terms with some of the more positive aspects of the current globalization phenomenon and its corresponding dynamics. Why? Because however vogue it is to think of globalization as mainly a process of cultural an economic imperialism, and as one that is initiated mainly by the North and correspondingly suffered by the South – which in many respects it surely is – it is also an interactive phenomenon which is increasingly blurring the distinctions that have heretofore accrued to the North-South dichotomy. On that view, it is a cross-cultural and cross-influencing phenomenon, one in which practically every inter-connected entity is influencing nearly every other in ways that are both subtle and profound (see Friedman 2000). And, as this process proceeds apace, it is becoming increasingly difficult to clearly delineate the various dichotomies that have heretofore so profoundly oriented our thinking.

Perhaps the old distinctions could have been more clearly drawn, and had firmer basis in reality, a little over half a century ago in the dawning light of the Post War era, the early days of post-war reconstruction, foreign aid, and country-by-country development projects. But today these distinctions would be harder to make. Nowadays many nations that formerly, and perhaps more clearly, fit on one side or the other of this great conceptual divide would be seen to share much in common – cultural and material similarities, similarities in the organization of their economies, societies, and systems of governance, and even similarities in how their members view the world and phrase their aspirations. This blurring of the old distinctions and the greater and more widespread sharing of similar problems and potentials – indeed sharing of certain fundamental human aspirations – has to be seen as cause for hope. Indeed, for humanity to be increasingly linked in this manner, and to be so increasingly aware of the breadth, similarities, and diversity of the whole of humankind, is unprecedented in all of human history.

Of course, there are still the indisputably pejorative aspects of globalization: the cultural imperialism or neocolonialism of the West, the North, or the 'temperate minority', for example, however you prefer to term them, whose cultural, symbolic, and economic systems are introduced or imposed on others unlike them, with all the accompanying cultural and societal strains this promotes. Yet even this perspective can become overdrawn, since on the ground these problems often only entail and mainly impact minority populaces at both ends of the linked spectrum.

Even economic imperialism, which many feel is the easiest aspect of the globalization phenomenon to understand – and condemn – can be over-simplified and

painted in the wrong colors. The 'temperate minority's' rapid mobilization of large amounts of capital, for example, whereby capital is suddenly moved in, and then just as suddenly moved out of capital-deficient countries, certainly poses serious problems in the countries which are suddenly colonized in this way, and then just as suddenly abandoned.

But this has led some to overlook another aspect of this phenomenon, and it is that those who move capital around so freely and rapidly – wherever they are found – are usually economic competitors with many others having that same capability, and through their collective actions they can seriously destabilize the very capital and currency markets that they draw their sustenance from. Moreover, if only these were hurt by their participation in this game, we might say they got their just deserts, but collectively their actions can also work serious hardships on a wider network and greater number of people, including their employees, their suppliers and customers, their investors, and the many others who are economically articulated with them. And this can be just as true among the 'temperate minority' as the 'tropical majority'. Yes, when the North gets a 'cold' the South often gets 'pneumonia'. But take a longer view of the rise and fall of civilizations and it is not farfetched to see that ultimately neither is immune from the occasional decimating 'plague'.

Moreover, not all of the economic problems that are suffered by the 'tropical majority' can be attributed solely to their global links with the 'temperate minority'. Internal colonialism, for example, which entails the political and economic dominance and exploitation of the 'tropical majority' *internally* by people hailing from the same communities or states, is an all-too widespread reality throughout much of the tropical world. To be sure it is often just a link in a larger global economic chain, but just as surely it also often exists without having any links beyond the tropical nation where it is so prevalent.

Additionally, notwithstanding globalization's darker side, it has some very bright ones as well. Prime examples include today's rapid, dependable, and relatively less expensive travel and transport systems, which have enabled many heretofore 'localized' people, including multitudes from the 'tropical majority', to visit and in some cases resettle in parts of the world that are situated far from their home regions and communities. Moreover, an even larger number of 'tropical majority' people, even if they have not physically traveled far from their home communities, now know a great deal more about the rest of the world than their parents and their ancestors before them did, thanks to the dynamic and explosive proliferation of communications on a global scale. Thus, while their local cultures have often demonstrated tremendous persistence and resilience, at the same time such people have also gained new perspectives for living their lives that were unknown among their immediate predecessors.

Similarly, today's larger and more responsive communications networks – especially those associated with the internet and email capabilities – are essentially egalitarian, spanning heretofore un-crossable chasms of cultural and historical differences, and are increasingly accessible to even the poorest and most isolated people in the world. As a result there are fewer truly 'isolated' or 'localized' people in the world today. People who would be so categorized only a few decades ago now know a great deal more about the world beyond them, and are increasingly communicating

and interacting with people who are situated at considerable distances from them. The result is a blurring of the differences, both real and perceived, that heretofore existed between them.

The foregoing innovations in communications have thus led to a greater global commerce in *non-material things,* such as ideas about ethics, morality, and what is desirable in political and economic systems and systems of governance. This has come about through an increasingly widespread and global-scale 'chat' about how to meet human desires and promote higher levels of human well being, while at the same time sustaining the natural resources that humans depend upon. These innovations in communications, which were unseen little more than a decade ago, now hold great potential for bringing about greater intra-human understanding and empathy worldwide. The old barriers to human unity – cultural and geographical distance and isolation – are breaking down, while a new collective consciousness may be emerging *on a global level.*

RECENT AND BLURRING EXPERIENCES OF MY OWN

In his essay, Kurien quotes several communications he has recently had with colleagues via email, and this prompts me to share some of my own recent experiences in that same regard. For example, only a few weeks ago, while conducting fisheries research on a tiny island off the south coast of Iceland, I visited the community's small public library and there passed the major part of an afternoon in 'chat' via email with a small-scale fisherman living in the state of Tamil Nadu in Southeast India. A colleague who was doing field research there 'introduced' me to him over the web, after inviting him to accompany him to a 'cyber café' that had been recently opened in his small coastal community.

At first we traded pleasantries, comparing weather conditions in our respective places. While he was experiencing oven-like, 35°C, sun-splashed days, I was experiencing chilly-damp, 8°C, overcast days with misting rain. Surely we were 'chatting' with each from the vantage points of our respectively 'tropical' and 'temperate' settings. But these distinctions quickly faded into the background as we got down to talking about the things that more importantly concerned us at the time.

With me he shared his concerns over access to the fisheries that he and fellow community members had long plied, especially their fears that governmental officials might not in good faith enforce a near-shore trawler ban that had been recently instituted. He also expressed concern for the prices that his future catches might fetch in both the regional and export-oriented markets that he sold them into, as well as concerns about not having sufficient funds to replace some fishing gear that he owned which had recently been damaged. He also worried about whether he would be able to afford some necessary maintenance on his 5-meter fiberglass boat and its moderate-power outboard motor. With him, on the other hand, I shared my uncertainties about how I was going about doing my research in Iceland, and corresponding uncertainties about what I was actually learning there.

To me this fisherman qualifies as a member of Kurien's 'tropical majority'. Not only is his life greatly influenced by events taking place far from his sphere of

existence, at the same time he also mentioned his membership, and immersion, in a rich web of household, community, and societal relations. Thus, he also wondered whether his local fishing cooperative, with its joint partners who were his kinsmen and neighbors, would be able to loan him funds for purchasing his damaged gear. Regarding his household, he wondered whether his wife's care for an ailing parent and his children's increasing involvements in their schools would take away from their work as the main processors and marketers of his catches. In sum, he struck me as both a 'global' man *and* as a 'local' man, yet at the same time also as a member of Kurien's 'tropical majority'. And from my great distance, these two aspects of him seemed almost seamlessly integrated.

I am also sure that he and his peers in Southeast India have much in common with the small-scale fishermen I was working with in Iceland, who, I cannot resist pointing out here, would otherwise have to be pigeonholed among the 'temperate minority' if we were to take Kurien's dichotomy to its logical conclusion. Why I feel that the fisherman I chatted with in India and the fishermen I was working with in Iceland are so similar is because the problems and dilemmas each emphasizes are so similar. In essence, I feel they are members of a rapidly emerging 'global community', which may become even more intensely articulated and convergent in coming years.

Milling Humanity Does Worry Me

Kurien states: 'Coming from the "majority" world, large human populations as such do not worry me. In the "tropical world", milling humanity is an integral part of any ecosystem there. What gives me the shivers … is the "emptiness" of the "temperate" world along with the sense of loneliness felt even when people are around.' About the latter part of the foregoing statement I am somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, the isolating and alienating aspects of Western Civilization have been dominant themes in its *belles-lettres*, cultural descriptions, and cultural critiques all through the past century, so there must be something to it. Yet, on the other hand – and no doubt I am expressing a very Northern bias here – I also think feelings of loneliness and emptiness can be merely a state of mind, and thus things within the power of the perceiver to remedy or at least to mitigate.

Indeed, as Marcuse reminds us in his *Essay on Liberation* (1969), or as Maslow notes in his *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (1971), and as multitudes of others, including myriad spiritual and religious thinkers have reminded us, development is not just about improving the material and economic circumstances in which humans live, it should also entail improving their spiritual circumstances as well, that is, it should be about facilitating the fullest possible realization of a people's potential as persons, while also facilitating the best-possible organization and functioning of the societal and political contexts in which they live out their lives. Thus, when we lament the materialism and disaffection it prompts among people living the North, we may be led to forget the possibilities that still exist there for finding happiness and fulfillment.

On the other hand, I am far less ambivalent regarding Kurien's stating that

large populations do not worry him. Here I must emphatically state that – *past a certain point* – large human populations worry me a great deal.

Why?

In the social sciences it has been fashionable lately to discredit Malthusian writers such as Garrett Hardin (1968 and 1993), indeed to discredit Malthus himself (1992 [1806]). These writers are frequently accused of purveying a misanthropic view of humanity, one that assumes that humans are everywhere motivated by pervasive greed, and as such are unable to avoid the eventual degradation and depletion of the natural resources that they depend upon. On this view, the many recorded instances of human societies that have instead emphasized cooperation, mutual interdependence, and the subordination of individual self interest to the community's best interest are held up as mere exceptions to this 'tragic' view of humanity.

And I agree, but only up to a point, because ultimately there is only a finite and fixed supply of natural resources to go around, regardless of the scientific and technological innovations that occasionally come along to seemingly increase them, and it is therefore illusory to believe that natural resources will continue to increase indefinitely in response to human needs. Call that a Northern perspective if you will – although, frankly, many capitalistic entrepreneurs in the North would take exception to it – but to me it just seems a matter of obvious common sense. I am back in the realm of materialism now, and within that realm it seems clear that there are only a finite amount of resources available to humanity on planet Earth.

Thus, I remain far more influenced by the thinking that was asserted in various popular books arising in the late 1960s and early 1970s, those by Ehrlich (1972), for example, as well as other more systematic studies emanating from the Club of Rome. All of these persuasively argued that there were limits to the possible growth of human populations and human economies that utilize natural resources (see also Meadows *et al.*, 1972, or more recently, United Nations 1991).

Human populations make significant demands on natural resources, and fundamentally speaking larger human populations make greater demands. Yes, the North makes demands on energy resources that are disproportionate to the number of people it contains, but this observation must still take second place to the fact that food is, and will remain, humanity's most crucially important resource.

Thus, however difficult it may be to calculate such things as 'maximum sustainable yield' or 'carrying capacity', we still need to acknowledge the obvious and commonsense reality of these concepts. Indeed, we easily allow that they apply to birds and whales, so why not to humans as well?

There *are* limits to the growth of future human populations, serious ones, not only in terms of natural and food resources, but also in terms of space limitations and the infrastructures needed to support them. Indeed, in many world regions these limits have already been surpassed – in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, which is witness to some of the most widespread food shortages in the world. To be sure an unfair distribution of human food is an exacerbating factor in such regions, a problem that must be addressed, in part what Kurien is calling for when he suggests 'sustainable international trade'. But even in the unlikely event of resolving international-trade inequalities once and for all, there would still be vast regions having insufficient resources to meet their people's food needs.

Indeed, at some level I think Kurien believes this too. For example, in his essay where he discusses transitions and contemporary problems in Kerala fisheries, he first cites a colleague, Rolf Willmann: 'Currently, there appears to be a strong convergence about the lessons one can learn from the fisheries and fishing communities in both the North and the South: fishing is getting harder; there is less fish, there are many more who also claim some part of the coastal resources and marine ecosystem, there is water pollution and habitat destruction, and the costs of fishing skyrocket. The only solace of fishers is that fish prices, by and large, also go up…' (Willmann, e-mail communication). Kurien follows that foregoing statement with this one of his own: 'The picture I have painted of what happened in Kerala is certainly applicable to a vast number of small-scale fisheries in the "tropical-majority" world today. In a context of higher population pressures and shrinking opportunities for people outside the fishery, the choices of livelihood are increasingly limited.'

By presenting the two discussions appearing immediately above, Kurien seems to be saying that he is indeed concerned about growing human populations, including those in Kerala – however much he feels their problems have been caused or exacerbated by various Northern initiatives that impacted them.

An Agenda for Future Fisheries Research, Social Science, Development, and Management Policy

In his essay, Kurien provides a comprehensive agenda for future fisheries research, social science, development, and management policy. As such, I am in full agreement with his stress on the importance of bringing to forefront of that agenda ways of resolving, or at least mitigating, multiple-use conflicts and property rights disputes in small-scale fisheries. He is also right on track when calls for the development and implementation of new forms of community-based management, changing the principal units of analysis to what he describes as the 'community-market-state triad', and focusing on the linkages between producers and consumers in hopes of forging more sustainable approaches to international trade that do not jeopardize basic food security. To this I would add that meeting the food security and income needs of the people living in closest proximity to fisheries resources should in most cases – and especially in food-deficient regions – be the first tier and fixed socio-economic overhead of any fisheries allocation policies, before any other harvesting for any other reasons is permitted.

On the other hand, regarding his suggestion to forge a more sustainable international trade, I would add a cautionary note, and it is that sustainability, however appealing it may seem, is also a rather ambiguous concept which can be interpreted in various, even opposite, ways by various entities who wish to appropriate it to serve their particular interests. Hence, as Escobar (1995:192-199) forcefully argues, the concept has recently been the linchpin of a hegemonic discourse purveyed by the powerful nations regarding their role in the development of less powerful nations. These powerful nations, that Escobar refers to as a global 'ecocracy', in his view manipulate the sustainability concept to serve their own interests, and to the detriment of many less powerful nations. Thus, any discourse about sustainability in

fisheries research, development, and management-policy must always be preceded by the question: 'sustainability of *what*, sustainability *how*, and sustainability *for whom*?'

Regarding governance, Kurien's agenda is also rich in noting that 'governance of the … seas [and their living resources] … must necessarily be nested – multi-tiered and overlapping. It is at the mezzo level – at the realm of nation and state – that the governance structures and the relevant institutional arrangements are well laid out.' After all, the world is still very much an assemblage of nation states, and as such the various formal institutions, agencies, and even NGOs arising from these will remain crucial for addressing the foregoing future challenges.

As for Kurien's suggestions regarding international research cooperation, I wholeheartedly agree with his stress on making 'recipients' partners in such endeavors. I am also intrigued with his proposing the implementation of 'research contribution parity' in such endeavors, such that the 'time and services of all persons in an international research project can be factored on the same basis for commensurate services and expertise'. Indeed, this may be an effective antidote to the paternalism that still pervades fisheries science, research, development, and policy-making in so many contexts.

On the other hand, I feel less certain about Kurien's call to understand 'actual social reality' before moving to levels of abstraction. On my view people are real and measurable things that have real and measurable needs, whereas 'society' ever remains elusive and somewhat of an abstraction. Yes society is real, and just as certainly there are social realities. But just what the 'realities' are remains debatable, reflecting diverse rather than convergent opinions, and as such ever vulnerable to infection by ideologues and other opportunists having agendas of their own for human societies.

To Kurien's agenda for future fisheries science, development, and management, I would only add a few, perhaps more prosaic, items of my own. First, we need to *remember our priorities*, as we are reminded by Johannes (1994:xi) who states, 'Implicit in the arguments of fisheries social scientists is the assumption that the ultimate objective of fisheries management should be to sustain human societies in general and fishers in particular.' Furthermore, we must never forget that fisheries are not aquatic regions holding certain living resources, nor regions where certain fishing methods are utilized, but rather the articulation of natural marine ecosystems with human activities. In other words, *the fisheries are a human phenomenon*.

Secondly, I would urge that we *redouble our efforts to understand fishers' 'folk management' and 'traditional ecological knowledge' (TEK)*. From the mid 1980s through the 1990s many social scientists who were interested in the fisheries held out great hope that a greater understanding of the 'folk management' practices and 'traditional ecological knowledge' of localized fishing peoples would virtually revolutionize, humanize, and render considerably more effective the science and craft of fisheries management (for example, Berkes 1987; Cordell 1989; Dyer and McGoodwin 1994; Johannes 1977, 1978; McGoodwin 1984, 1990; Ruddle and Akimichi 1984). Now, however, one of the main lessons learned is that this localized knowledge is difficult to uncover, and, moreover, because it is rarely written down or articulated in any systematic fashion, is extremely difficult to incorporate in a formal

way into contemporary fisheries-management policies.

Yet, we should not give up because 'folk management' and 'TEK' are still the truest expressions of a fishing people's past experience, cultural identity, and thinking about how the fisheries they rely upon should be utilized. Just because these proved more difficult to elicit and formalize than we initially anticipated is no reason for abandoning our explorations into them now. Indeed, they still hold great promise for resolving, if not mitigating, most of the problems that Kurien has so thoroughly described. Otherwise, until a lot more is known about fishing people and fishing communities, fisheries science, development, and management will continue to go forth only dimly and partially illuminated.

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Ghanaian Canoe Decorations[1]

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Abstract This essay deals with the pictograms, written texts, and paintings as they occur on the canoes in the Ga speaking area in Ghana. It is argued that they are very succinct, symbolic expressions of a wide range of relations, identifications and sympathies of their owners/users with things, fellow human beings and ideas. The decorations are chosen from a big reservoir of possibilities and carefully composed into what one could call a distinctive, decorative Gestalt, so that each canoe gets, just like its owner/user, a recognizable identity or 'individuality' amongst other, similarly treated canoes. A beach with moored canoes can be considered as a revealing materialization of the social community of the fishermen. The canoes are their messengers and talk for them, they show the diversification of their mindscape and tell a lot about how they relate to each other and the world they live in.

> At first, Kobina Ebow took them to the canoes
> to see the figures carved into the sides of the canoes
> along their upper sections.
> They were mostly of sea creatures like crabs, starfish, squid, and other types of fish;
> But there were some figures of land animals too, such as lizards, tortoises and birds,
> in addition to figures of the sun, moon, and stars, the moon always in crescent shape.
> The children walked alongside the canoes and it was great fun for them to
> read what was written on them in English and Fante:
> 'Sea Never Dry', 'One Man no Chop',
> 'You Do Good for Your Self',
> 'Sika Mmpe Rough',
> 'Ekow Dzi Bi a Ewam so Dzi Bi', 'Yaaba nna Yaaba'
> (J.O. de Graft Hanson, *The People From the Sea*, Tema, Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1988, 13/14)

Introduction

When one travels along Ghana's coastline and visits the sandy beaches of the numerous fishing villages one is very often struck by huge number of colorfully decorated dugout canoes of different sorts and sizes moored there (see photos 1 and 2). One not only wonders where the big trees grow that the giant craft of sometimes over 30 feet are made from, but also what the meaning is, if any, of the abundant decorations and mottoes painted on or carved into the sides. Most intriguing and calling to be decoded is the series of more or less abstract pictograms, which seem to occur in endless variations and which look like a rebus containing a hidden message. The form and appearance of the canoes is such that one gets the impression that they have

Photo 1. Canoes moored at Jamestown beach (Accra).

not changed much over time; that the fishermen used age old and very traditional symbols and proverbs handed to them by their forbears who got them from theirs, and theirs, and theirs. In other words there has been only continuity and no change. In this paper, I want to make clear that there are grounds to think otherwise, that as well as continuity there has been a lot of change. Apart from the kind of tree(s) the canoes are made from and the particular shape these vessels therefore could get, not only their use and function, but also and especially their outward appearance seems to have considerably changed over time and to have grown more layered and complex. In order to illustrate this I will present material I collected in the 1990s in Ga coastal communities on the beaches in and near Accra concerning the kinds of symbols, written texts, and paintings occurring on canoes, and how they were read and interpreted by fishermen. Then I will present some historical data in order to make clear that the decorative patterns of the past were different, less complex qua form and content, as well as a hypothesis concerning the origin of the written texts. First, however, I will start with some background information on the artisanal fishing sector in Ghana and a brief presentation of material concerning the manufacture of canoes and the ways in which fishermen perceive and treat their vessels.

Setting

Ghana has a huge artisanal fishing sector compared with the modern trawlers' sector. The latter came into existence after the Second World War, when the first indigenous trawlers were built.[2] Their number was relatively small until the mid-1980s, but then a rapid increase took place. While in 1984 there were 44 industrial vessels, ten years

later they numbered more than 80 (see Anonymus 1996). In comparison with the number of canoes (in 1996 over 8000) operative along Ghana's coast, the number of trawlers can be considered small.[3] Nevertheless, the artisanal sector is seriously threatened, by the increase of the trawlers because they fish in waters that were formerly the sole domain of the artisanal sector. This development has everything to do with dwindling fish stocks in Ghana's coastal waters. As a consequence canoe fishermen started to travel further, which has meant higher fuel costs and lower income, to adapt net sizes, which has meant catching more and more juvenile fish, and to even use illegal fishing methods, such as dynamite. Before the 1950s, the crews had to use paddles and/or sails to reach the fishing grounds. But since then more and more fishermen have bought outboard motors (of 20 or 40 Hp).[4] Now the number of canoes without such motors, often made in Japan, is relatively small. The canoes in use for beach seining and the smaller ones usually are not motorized.[5] But the bigger ones almost all are. The artisanal fishermen distinguish several types of canoes, using net type or fishing technique as a criterion.

> The largest category of canoe in the Ghanaian artisanal fleet both in number and size is the *Ali/Poli/Watsa* type. These local names refer to the type of net operated. The *Ali* is a sardinella drift/surround net, while the *Watsa* and *Poli* are purse seines, the main difference between the two being the twine and mesh size used in their manufacture. The *Poli* has a much smaller mesh size and is used extensively for the capture of anchovy, the *Watsa* mainly being used for larger sized pelagic species. In fact it is now rare to find a pure *Poli* or *Watsa* net as fishermen are increasingly combining the different mesh sizes including even Ali in one net, known loosely as 'mixed' net (Sheves 1991:23, italics JV).[6]
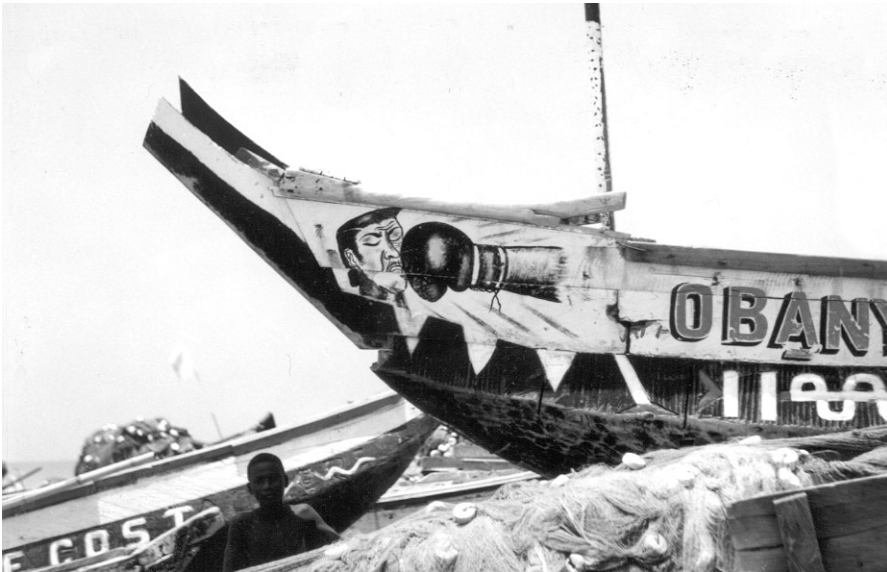

Photo 2. Canoes moored at Jamestown beach (Accra).

Next to these *ali/poli/watsa* canoes one distinguishes set net, drift gill net, and hook and line canoes.[7] The prices of canoes, nets, and outboard motors rose enormously in the 1990s. For many artisanal fishermen it therefore became very difficult to remain independent in the business or to start a new enterprise. Most of them became or were already just crew members working with a canoe, nets and an outboard motor belonging to a non-fisherman or -woman who had accumulated some capital in another sector. Very important investors were women who earned money in the wholesale fish trade (the so-called fish-mammies) and well-educated non-fishermen, often born in a fishing village, who inherited a canoe or even canoes, who the fishermen called 'scholars'. Dependent on the type of canoe the number of crewmembers varies from 2 to 18. The Fanti have the reputation of being the best fishermen on the Ghanaian coast. According to oral tradition they were the ones who in the eighteenth century introduced fishing to the Ga in Ga Mashi (Central Accra) La (Brown 1947:23/24) and Teshie and even to the Ewe of the Volta Region.[8] Nowadays one finds Fanti, Ga and Ewe fishermen working next to each other all along Ghana's coast and even the coasts of neighboring countries, for migration abroad is a frequently occurring phenomenon (cf. Jorion 1988; Odotei 1992). However, the rule is that the fishermen who visit or even settle on the beaches under other tribal/traditional authorities or chieftaincies, have to stick to the rules applied there. So a Fanti on a Ga beach has to obey Ga rules and regulations and *vice versa*. The whole coast of Ghana, from Keta in the East to Assini in the West, is divided into particular districts, landing beaches or fishing villages supervised by chief fishermen and their assistants, sometimes with their own associations and/or cooperative societies, all organized under a big umbrella organization called the 'Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council' with its headquarters in Accra. It is from this organization that I got the list of the canoe owners' names and the names of their vessels for a number of landing beaches.

The Coming into Being of a Canoe

The production of a huge dugout canoe has always taken a large commitment of time and labor. Good sources with regard to the production and use of canoes in the 17th century are the publications by De Marees, Dapper, Barbot and Bosman, who were regular visitors of the coastal area between Takoradi and Cape Coast, and keen observers of the life and work of its (Fanti) population.[9] In those times the huge trees used for canoe building (the wawa trees or *Triplichiton sclerexylon*) were still growing in the forests near the coast (cf. Brown 1947:24). But soon they were not available there any longer, and one had to travel inland in order to find the trees with the right diameter (nowadays at least 165 cm). Since one had to transport the dugouts to the coast and a suitable road system did not yet exist, it goes without saying that the production sites were almost always near rivers. Whereas in the 18th century Shama at the mouth of the Prah used to be an important production center,[10] in the beginning of the 19th century one had to travel six hours upstream in order to find such a place on an island in the middle of this river (cf. Marrée 1817 and Bowdich 1819). Today the main areas where the right wawa trees grow are in the center of

Ghana. 'Although found in all vegetation zones it (the wawa species – JV) is most abundant in the moist semi-deciduous north-west subtype, which occurs in the area of western Ashanti Region, southern Brong Ahafo Region and to the north of the Western Region' (Sheves 1991:3). It is there that carving teams are active now, which respectively spot, buy, fell and carve proper trees.[11] I will not describe here the whole technical production process in the forest, for this is done in great detail by Sheves (1991), but concentrate instead upon a few dimensions which are not dealt with by him. One of these is very poetically described as follows in the marvelous tale *The Canoe's Story* by Meshack Asare.[12]

> One by one our friends left us. I knew that one day
> my own turn would come. And it came.
> One early morning a small gang of men came to me.
> They brought with them presents of cloth, a fowl, a bottle of gin and some eggs.
> They offered the gifts to me and my spirit, the spirit that
> had been with me for the hundreds of years it took me to grow from
> a sapling to the towering giant I had become.
> They prayed that no harm should come to them
> While they fell me and worked on me.
> I was rather pleased about this.
> With their gifts and prayers they had shown their respect for me.

Every time a team of carvers starts with a felling it has to pour a libation in order to please the tree, which is perceived as a living being having a spirit and even a particular sex. During one of my interviews with fishermen at the beach of Jamestown, Accra, one of them said the following.

> Let me explain something for you. You know those who cut down the timber, those who bring down the timber in the forest, they usually perform rites before the timber falls and they knew whether the timber that falls is a male or a female. They would tell you, that timber is a male or a female. They would tell you that this timber is a man or is a woman. Therefore from there then you know what to do.[13]

This perception continues after a wawa tree is turned into a seaworthy canoe. Fishermen speak about their canoes as male and female beings that are able to talk to them about the right time and place for fishing. Brown, who made a thorough study of the fishing industry of the La community before the Second World War, wrote thus.

> A good boat well treated will come to the owner when there are fish about and call him '*fi-fi-fi-fi-fi*'. If he is not at home she goes to his mother's house and calls there. When she arrives at the place where the fish are she will call again. That is the place to anchor and there many fish will be caught. In the month of August 1934, one man, so called and guided, caught forty-seven tunny in one day' (1947:42).

In the 1990s Jamestown fishermen I spoke with told similar stories. According to them male canoes moved differently, were stronger and more powerful. With them

Photo 3. The chiseling of the hull.

the catches were higher.[14]

     After the carvers have dug out a wawa, which takes a lot of time – in Asare's story the felt tree 'talks' about forty days – it is put on a lorry and transported to the beach where its buyer wants to have it based. There the hull undergoes some further

chiseling (see photo 3) and is torched with flames in order to make it stronger and more weather- and waterproof. There a carpenter puts the topside planking on it, makes the thwarts and places a bracket outside the starboard side for the outboard engine (see photo 4). And finally the canoe is painted and gets its decorations and name according to the instructions of the owner. In case (s)he[15] is what one calls in Ghana a 'heathen', that is, non Christian or Muslim, (s)he very often has already paid a visit to a fetish priest in order to get advice on how to treat the canoe, what kind of taboos one has to observe to let 'him/her' work in a profitable and safe way, and where which kind of fetishes to secure good catches have to be hidden. A common instruction is to regularly feed the canoe with *oto*, which is mashed yam mixed with palm oil, onions and eggs, and let it drink. In Teshie, a Ga fishing village near Accra, I more than once saw this type of reddish food put in nice little heaps on top of the topside planking near the prow of the canoe (cf. Field 1937: photo facing p. 70). Another way to feed the craft is by throwing eggs at its head.[16] In this connection it is interesting that the Ga term for the stem is 'lele-na', which means 'canoe's mouth', 'canoe's entrance' and sometimes also something like 'canoe's face'. The stern is called 'lele-duna' which can be translated according to one of my informants as 'canoe's tail' or 'buttocks'. When I was faced with these translations I immediately associated canoes with fishes. Later on, in the section on the decorations I hope to make clear that this is a less unusual association than one might think. With regard to taboos I discovered that fishermen do not observe the same taboos, but that these taboos differ per fisherman or per canoe. In order to illustrate this I present here a part of a conversation as it was recorded at Jamestown beach by one of my informants, K., when I was out of Ghana.[17]

Photo 4. Canoe with topside planking ready for being decorated.

K. All right are there certain things that are not done or supposed to be done during the fishing process?

X. There are different canoes with their different rules and regulations. There are some, when they are going to sea, any one can sleep or have sex with a woman before going and nothing would happen. But there are some canoes when they are going fishing and if a member had had intercourse with a woman the previous night, then it's bad luck for all of them and they may not get anything.[18]

K. But don't you have anything at all in the canoe with which you protect yourself or forbid something which should not be done during fishing?

X. There are many who do not have any *juju* at all as they go to sea. Some may just say 'let's pray'. They may buy incense and burn it as they go. They don't have anything at all.

Y. But sometimes some Ga (Accra) canoes do not allow *kenkey* (a particular type of food – JV) in it for fishing. Even those that do not permit *kenkey* are more than those that permit *kenkey*.

Next to observing particular taboos many non-Christian fishermen also put fetishes or *juju* in their canoes in order to catch much fish and be protected against danger and malicious people.[19] A common place to hide these fetishes is in the inside of the stem under a small lead plate.[20] Next to these plates one sometimes finds small bottles with a yellow, white or blue liquid in it,[21] often covered with egg and fowl's blood. Christians often paint (white) crosses at this particular spot. Another way to avoid all kinds of danger and be lucky is the use of flags with symbols derived from *The 6th and 7th Books of Moses*, a publication popular amongst fishermen.[22] Canoes then are very particular objects for Ghanaian fishermen that they treat with great respect and perceive as a particular kind of animated beings, with whom one can communicate and which can be influenced not only in positive but also in negative ways.[23] They carve all kinds of symbols into their hull, and paint a name, slogans, and usually colorful images on the gunwale and topsides to let them look beautiful. The canoe in Asare's story, for instance, tells:

> After that a man came to work on me. He carved some patterns into my sides. (…)
> Then he painted my patterns with bright colours. Finally he stood back, looked at me closely and said, 'Ka Shi Me'.[24] Immediately (after) the man had left, the nearest canoe spoke up, 'Hullo, you are a beauty! Look at all the patterns and colours in your sides.'

Canoe Decorations in Ga Communities

I am by no means the first who developed an interest in Ghanaian canoe decorations. At the end of the 1920s A.P. Brown made a study of the iconography as it occurred on the canoes in and around La, a Ga community. Alas, I could not trace *The Teachers' Journal* of 1931 in which his article 'The fisherman's canoe' was published.[25] However, I am pretty sure that the canoe designs of the thirties as they are shown in the National Museum of Ghana and as Nunoo (1974) has published them were collected by Brown. When I showed these motifs to the chief fisherman of La in 1991 he was able to tell me in most cases what they represented. Some of them are still in use. After Brown, Nunoo (ibid.) and Coronel (1979) studied the designs as they occurred on the canoes in Fanti country. Coronel's study is much better than Nunoo's, for it is much more detailed. Nunoo, as a matter of fact, did not do much fieldwork and limits himself to a very succinct illustration of the following statement that

the designs on the gunwales have taken different forms in the last fifty years or so. In the 1930s they were more stylistic, embodying several animal motifs which mostly represented Akan sayings. (…) About twenty years later, the designs became more conventionalized. These often included objects such as tools, clocks, and guns, and some were purely abstract decorative fantasies (Nunoo 1974:34).

Coronel, on the contrary, is very precise in his descriptions of the kind of decorations ([non]representational motifs, proverbs, labels and names), where on the canoe one can find them (gunwales, bow and prow), whether they are carved or painted, whether the decorations are symmetrical, a-symmetrical or a combination of both, what colors are used, whether a canoe has one, two or even three decorated bands and, last but not least, whether the source of inspiration was traditional or modern iconography (that is iconography drawn from topical, contemporary sources).[26] Moreover, Coronel sketches how important rivalry between fishermen (for instance, belonging to different *asafo* or military companies) is in choosing a particular type of decoration, and how '[The] mobility of Fanti fishermen accounts for an interchange of motifs between fishing communities' (Coronel 1979:59). Finally he points out that canoe decorations are poly-interpretable, for they convey all sorts of (serious and less serious) messages, for example, about the philosophy, status, and religion of its owner. However, I think that Coronel is somewhat biased with regard to the ability of the Fanti fishermen to better decorate their canoes than other fishermen, for example, the Ga. What he remarks about La near Accra illustrates this bias quite well: 'Labadi, while a major fishing community is a Ga-speaking area and lacks the Fanti traditional heritage; as one might expect, canoe decoration here is not of the quality seen on Fanti canoes' (ibid.). The canoe decorations I saw at the beach of La in 1991/92 were, at least in my view, of the same quality as the ones I observed, for instance, in Winneba. But perhaps this has to be related to the fact, evidently not known to Coronel, that it were the Fanti who introduced the Ga of La to the fisheries (cf. Brown 1947) and therefore possibly also to their decorative style. Anyway, in what follows I will deal with the decorations occurring on canoes moored in the early 1990s at the beaches of La, Osu, Jamestown, and Chokor, which are all Ga communities.

Just as in Fanti coastal communities most of the canoes in the Ga fishing communities have their decorations, slogans and names on their gunwales. Sometimes one finds them also on a second or – very rare – third band above these gunwales on the topside planking, but then they are rarely carved and mostly painted. The topside planking of the big canoes, which was increased in height during the 1980s as a consequence of the use of larger and heavier nets, is in this area almost always painted white with a blue rectangular in the middle. This particular combination of colors makes them at sea immediately recognizable as Ga canoes coming from Jamestown (Accra). With respect to the iconography one can distinguish between abstract designs, such as horizontal and vertical stripes, triangles, rectangles, circles and ovals, in short geometrical forms on the one hand, and what I would like to call pictograms on the other. These pictograms can be divided into five categories: 1) pictograms of things, such as stools, swords, hats, keys, flags, anchors, arrows, and crosses; 2) pictograms of (parts) of plants, and trees; 3) pictograms of insects,
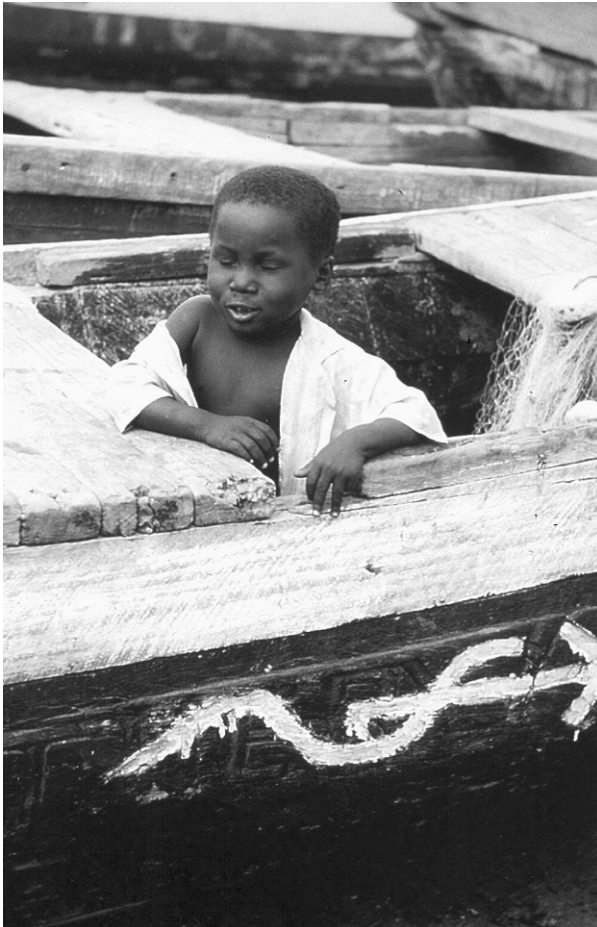
Photo 5. The chief fisherman of La, his linguist and the author.

birds, fishes and land animals; 4) pictograms of human beings or body parts such as hearts, hands, arms, penises; and 5) pictograms of celestial bodies, such as stars and the moon. The pictograms and abstract designs occur almost always in combination with written texts, such as proverbs, slogans and (biblical) names, specific abbreviations, numbers and references to passages in the Bible. Most of the gunwales contain a strip-like decoration of a very specific nature because it is a combination of images, letters and numbers, in short a peculiar text. But in case one wants to decipher, decode or 'read' this text one is immediately confronted with all kinds of serious difficulties, especially with regard to the interpretation of the pictograms. On the basis of Nunoo's piece one might get the impression that it is rather easy to understand what a single pictogram or a specific combination of pictograms stands for and that there is a broad *communis opinio* among the fishermen concerning their meaning. For Nunoo they refer to proverbs. Coronel, however, points out that it is by no means easy to trace the meaning of the motifs, for fishermen who buy second-hand, already decorated canoes often assign a new personal significance to them which might differ considerably from the original one. Moreover, he says, images become unclear through repetition. 'Many gunwale patterns pass from one generation to the next. With each repetition the motifs are a further step removed from their original meanings and become less specific and more chameleon-like in their translation' (Coronel 1979:59). Before I illustrate how much to the point this observation is, I have to mention the fact that it regularly occurs that new owners of second-hand canoes ask design makers to carve new motifs over old ones in order to really make them their own property.[27] What struck me when talking with the fishermen on the Ga landing beaches about the proper way to read the abstract designs and pictograms on the gunwales was how different or 'chameleon-like' their interpretations

were. To the best of my recollections nobody ever referred to particular proverbs, not even the chief fishermen of La with whom I talked a lot about the motifs (see photo 5).[28] Let me present a few striking examples. Take the hat motif. Some did not recognize it as a hat but took the pictogram for an image of a bell or a turtle. Others who did recognize it as a hat disagreed about whose hat it represented, of a chief or of a *wulomɔ* (a specialist who takes care of all the rituals in a fishing community). Only some claimed that a canoe with such a symbol on it (once) belonged to this specialist or one of his relatives. The anchor/arrow motif (see photo 6), which very frequently occurs on the gunwales of canoes, is sometimes said to represent the anchors and anchor chains as they were in use on European sailing ships, in my view a rather convincing reading.[29] But according to an assistant of one of the chief fishermen of Jamestown this was a totally wrong interpretation.

N. During the building of Noah's Ark this was an Arabic written writing, but this our fishermen, they don't understand it. So they thought that it is something like just writing, [but] this is *bismallaharahi mahim*. This was the word which moved Noah's boat, because in those days there were no outboard motors and no paddles. So when Noah finished building the Ark [a] higher word from God was sent to him [that] was this sign. So you will find this sign on every canoe at every landing beach. But when you ask them, they don't know. They thought it is just a sign. But it is God's words. (…) They don't know, but this is the real fact or the fact inside this drawing, concerning his drawing. (…) So this is not a drawing, but it is an Arabic writing. J. And it was for the first time on the Ark of Noah? N. Yes, on Noah's Ark. This was the highest words that move the boat.[30]

Photo 6. The anchor/arrow motif.

Only once another fisherman told me the same story with regard to the anchor/arrow motif. The association with Noah's Ark came also to the fore with regard to another pictogram sometimes occurring

Photo 7. Pictogram of a man with an oversized penis.

on gunwales and which looks like a branch with leaves. Some fishermen claimed that it represented the leaf the dove brought back to Noah as a sign that the flood was over. Others, however, said that it was just a design liked by the owner of the canoe and had no particular meaning at all. The pictograms of human beings were also not interpreted in one sense. A specific one of a human figure with the right hand raised and the left hand pointing to an oversized buttock was said to mean: 1) somebody in danger, 2) a courageous member of the Gbese clan of Jamestown which led the Ga in a combat with the Ashanti, and 3) 'come and chop my buttocks'. When I interviewed the sub chief fisherman of Osu about a very specific pictogram in the form of an A with the lying bar slightly extended beyond the right hand slanting line, I immediately got the impression that it concerned a more abstract version of this human figure. For he said: '…and then it goes up as if it has raised the hand like this (makes an upward movement with the right hand – JV), [that is] Gbese, Jamestown. They write it in a big A letter, and after crossing the middle, then they extend the bar used in crossing the middle and then they bend it like this (the same upward movement – JV). It means: "come and chop (fork) my bottom."' Whether my association is correct or not, the important thing is that we are confronted here with the fact that one pictogram is read in different ways and that two different ones are interpreted in the same sense, which clearly shows that there is not one way of understanding them. At least in certain cases, there are particular pictograms, such as stools, swords, crosses, specific fishes and birds, which apart or in combination, are given the same meaning by almost everybody interviewed.

     Before dealing with a few of these unambiguous cases I want to say something about one pictogram occurring on canoes in the Ga area which still puzzles me very much, that is, the image of a small man with an enormous erect penis (see photo 7). When I asked fishermen about its possible meaning they did not *say* anything, but

instead started laughing sometimes accompanied by obscene bodily movements. Coronel also noticed this kind of pictogram and suggests that the erect genitalia carry an image of a very brave man with an emphasis on 'man' (1979:58). If this is correct, then one might translate this pictogram in words as follows: 'this canoe is just like its owner, a very potent man'. I will later come back to the intriguing nexus between sexuality and the fisheries, already touched upon earlier on in this paper.

With regard to unambiguous pictograms such as stools nobody seemed to doubt their meaning; they indicate that a canoe belongs to a chief or a member of a chief's family. The pictograms often flanking a stool at both sides represent for the fishermen the chiefly swords (see photo 8). The flags refer to the clans making up the community.[31] Also with regard to the frequently occurring combination of a snake-like creature and a leg-less bird both with their head bent backwards everybody came up with the same interpretation, at least in the first instance. These pictograms represented for everybody I talked to, *onufu* and *sankofa*, respectively a particular kind of 'sea snake' and a specific bird. The bird is able to look forwards and…backwards, so that it can spot the danger, which is haunting it in the form of this 'sea snake'.[32] Though there is great agreement in this respect, if one probes further all sorts of nuances in interpretation crop up, which I cannot deal with here. To conclude this section on pictograms I want to say, that they form a collection of motifs of mixed Fanti and Ga origin, which do not have a single meaning shared by all the fishermen. On the contrary, they are read in many different ways, which are not always consonant with the owner's intentions. If an owner chooses specific pictograms in order to express particular 'messages', that does not mean that they will be understood in the way he intended, whereas whole stories might be read in pictograms chosen by an owner because he just fancied them. Sense seems to be in the eye of the beholder. I think this an important observation, for anthropologists

Photo 8. Canoe decorated with a stool and two swords

sometimes still tend to be after the discovery of 'the' meaning of symbols in particular communities or societies. Such a meaning often does not exist, as Cohen (1985) has convincingly shown, which does not mean that the sheer sharing of symbols is without significance. On the contrary, this sharing of symbols without sharing of meanings is what is so significant in the construction of a sense of belonging to a community, in this case a community of fishermen. But let me now concentrate for a moment on the written texts on canoes.

In the late 1980s the Ghana National Canoe Fishermen Council collected information on the artisanal fleet in use along Ghana's coast. The chief fishermen were asked to precisely register the kind of canoes (*ali*, *poli*, *watsa*, hook and line, etc.) were in use on the landing beaches they supervised, their owners, and the 'names' (sometimes called 'marks') of the canoes. The following is mainly based on the lists they submitted.[33] What immediately strikes when one sees these overviews is the fact that the category 'names' is rather broad, for it includes, for instance, next to real names (of persons, places, companies, clubs, organizations, and things) also numbers, abbreviations and slogans, mottos or parts of proverbs. However, the latter type of 'names' is clearly the dominant one. Before dealing with these telling 'marks', I first will say something about the other ones. Though one might expect a frequent use of the names of men and women on the basis of the fact that canoes are said to be male or female, this happened not to be the case. I only came across a few cases in which a canoe was named after a specific person. So there is a striking difference here with, for instance, Dutch bargemen who express the perception of their barge as a human being, more particular as a female one, in giving it the name of a woman. Right now I cannot think of a proper explanation for this remarkable contrast. More popular is the use of the names of countries (such as *Japan*, *Israel*, *Holland*, *Angola*, *u.s.a.*) and cities (such as *Lagos*, *Free Town*, *London*), probably the places where the money to buy the canoe was earned. One also finds every now and then the names of towns in Ghana (*Tafo*, *Takoradi*, and *Kidua* [= Koforidua]), and specific parts of Accra (*Mataheko*, *Jamestown*, *Korlebu*) on canoes. Sometimes canoes bear the names of popular restaurants or drinking spots in Accra, such as *Wato* or *Next Stop*. More often, however, one comes across names of particular stores, firms and companies, such as *Glamour*, *Kingsway*, *Texaco*, *Trade Fair*, *Commercial Bank*, *United Trading Company* (*u.t.c.*), *Tema Textile* [*Limited*] (*t.t.*[*l.*]) and *Ghana Airways*, all expressing a certain connection of the owner of a canoe with these institutions. Owners sometimes express their love of football by naming their canoe after a particular club (such as *Oly*[*mpics*], *City Boys*, *Stand Fast*, *Phobia*, *Kotoko* and even *Man*[*chester*]-*U*[*nited*]) or a popular player (*Polo*). Remarkable are the names referring to cars (such as *Ambulance*, *Station Wagon*, *Volvo* and *Tata* [a bus made in India]). To this category also belongs the rather cryptic name *Go-In-Side,* a term once in use for a police car. Numbers are also popular as names among owners, especially in Teshie, an important landing beach near Accra with almost 300 registered canoes, where I came across a lot of numbers sometimes in combination with a single letter, for instance, *T 99*. In this connection it is important to realize that the registration of a canoe under such a 'name' or even another one does not mean that it lacks further inscriptions or texts. Numbers, however, are evidently more in use to make clear that an owner possesses more than one canoe or possessed other canoes with the same

name.[34] A particular category is formed by abbreviations. Some refer to companies (such as *U.T.C.*, *P.Z.*, and *T.T.*), some to political parties (for instance, *C*[onvention] *P*[eople's] *P*[arty], founded by Kwame Nkrumah), others to particular phrases, expressions, slogans or proverbs. Interesting examples of the latter type are *K.Y.L.* which stands for 'Kill Your Light' and refers to the time the government proclaimed to be thrifty with electricity and *S.M.O.G.*, 'Save Me O God'. Of the same type as *C.C.P.* and *K.Y.L.* are non-abbreviated ones with an outspoken political connotation. *Curfew* is an example, for it refers to the period (for the last time in the early 1980s) in which people were not allowed to be in the streets after a certain hour in the evening, and *Yellow Corn* is another. Francis Agyei, who translated most of the 'names' for me, said about this name: 'It alludes to 1975/1976 when famine forced the Supreme Military Council of Ghana to import yellow corn meant for poultry for consumption by human beings'.[35] Names like *S.M.O.G.* bring me to the main category of names, that is, expressions of a religious nature on the one hand and specific phrases and proverbs containing a particular wisdom or moral view with regard to life and humans on the other. The languages used in the Eastern parts of Ghana are predominantly Ga and English. Only in a few cases Twi and Hausa occur. Canoe owners rather frequently give their canoes names revealing their religious affiliation. Especially, Christians like to use names like *Daanymɔsi* (Give thanks to God), *Nyamekye* (God's gift), *Nyonmɔ Dromɔ* (By God's grace), *Jesus Saves*, *God Bless*, *God First*, *Wonderful God*, *God's Power*, *Be True To God*, *Psalm 23* (or: *27, 46*, and *91*), *Christ Is The Answer, God Never Sleep, God Is King* (or simply biblical [geographical] names as *Canaan*, *Neneve* [Nineveh], *Noa*[*h*], *Ebenezer, Sampson* and *Jesus*). Only in a few cases one comes across an Islamic name, such as *Akwei Allah*, *Alhaji* and *El Shadai*, no wonder if one realizes that Ghana, at least in the South, is predominantly Christian. However, since the majority of the artisanal fishermen (both owners and non-owners) are neither Christian nor Moslem, but worship local (sea) Gods it is not surprising that religious names occur less than the other type in the category I am dealing with here, that is, the often strongly morally colored ones. Examples of this type are: *Yaa Ye Okomo* (Go and mind your own business), *Foo Ohe* (Turn yourself around), *Soro Nipa* (Fear human beings), *Pipe Naa* (Abundance is not gotten), *Kaatahe* (Do not touch it), *Okwe Onye* (Watch your mother [instead of me]), *Tsui* (Patience), *Naa Dani* (See before you talk), *Adzo* (Let sleeping dogs lie), and *Wiase Yeden* (Twi, The world is a difficult place to live in). Popular English ones are: *Sea Never Dry*, *Wait and See*, *Had I Known*, *Travel & See*, and *Cry Your Cry*. Every now and then rather obscene names are given to canoes, such as *Osootsoo* 'My clitoris', *Bie Ashweo Ye* 'This is the place where copulation takes place'/'This is where play/sexual love is made', and *Wase Yede* 'Your bottom/vagina is sweet'. *Dodo* also falls in this category, for it here concerns a polished way of referring to the vagina, *toto* in Ga.[36] I once saw *Tso ooo yoo naa* 'Fill a woman' together with the pictogram, already mentioned, of a man with an enormous erect penis on a canoe in Jamestown. Each time I asked fishermen what this peculiar combination meant they started laughing, moved with their bodies as if they were making love to someone, but did not explain it in words. It seems to me that these names and their bodily movements to 'explain' them are less an expression of the 'roughness and vulgarity' of the artisanal fishermen, as some intellectuals claimed, and more of the way they perceive their canoes, just like women, as indispensable means of re-production. Though the

temptation is great to elaborate on this, I will not give in to it. Instead I will present here a part of the conversation on 'names' recorded by my informant K. (see note 8). It shows in a nutshell how fishermen can talk about them and their possible background.

K. I was told formerly names or words were not written on canoes, but now they are done with the designs. Why? X. Some write words which they just fancy. But others are sometimes spiteful and write words to tell somebody something or to shame somebody, because of some quarrel between them. Y. Yes, maybe that the canoe owner had a quarrel with somebody. So he writes what he feels on the canoe. Z. But there is something else too. I have seen this canoe *Cold Store*. When it was bought it had no name, but every time when it went out, it 'killed' a lot of fish. So they decided to name the canoe *Cold Store,* because in a proper cold store there is always fish in.

Let me conclude this section with a few general observations concerning the written texts on canoes. The first remarkable thing is the fact that the slogans carved into or painted on the dugouts are treated as 'names'. This is a direct consequence of the organization and bureaucratization of the artisanal sector. Initially the texts were not meant to be used for administrative purposes, but only to express particular identifications, relations or sympathies with clubs, companies, parties, persons, places, religions and worldviews. And this is what they still do in spite of the fact that they nowadays also function as registered names. The texts are messages and statements, though sometimes cryptic ones, which are used to characterize and distinguish, to

Photo 9. Canoe at Teshie beach looking like a shark

Photo 10. A canoe with the painting of hand holding a shovel with a lot of fish.

tease and challenge, to criticize and joke, to invoke and ward off. Together with the other decorations they turn the canoe – this crucial means of production on which the existence and lives of the fishermen and their families depend – into a 'speaking' object, an entity with a 'voice', a 'messenger', or a vehicle of meaning with a particular identity. Against the background of the belief that canoes are dug out of living trees with their own sex and spirit one could even maintain that this use of texts to let canoes 'speak' and be more than just objects is just obvious. Anyway, the variety of texts carved into or painted on canoes can, at least in my view, in one way or another be related with this belief and/or the tendency to treat important means of production as something more than just that.

Let me now turn to a kind of decoration I have not touched upon so far. At the landing beach of Jamestown (Accra) I saw several canoes that had next to a series of pictograms and written text(s) also paintings on their prow. They were usually painted just above a particular type of carving, that is, of three teeth like designs followed by a 'fishtail', which is never lacking on canoes in the Ga area, though its meaning was not easy to trace. Some fishermen said that it was just a design to make canoes look nicer, but others told me that it were 'signs to make the boat swift like a fish'. Since I once saw a canoe in Teshie near Accra with just a big eye painted above this carving and immediately thought of the craft as a huge and dangerous fish, more in particular a shark (see photo 9), I am inclined to favor the latter interpretation.[37] The paintings just like the slogans are very diverse. Next to the big eye I saw, for example, paintings of a face severely hit by a hand in a huge boxing glove (see photo 1) of a hand holding a shovel with a lot of fish (see photo 10), of birds, of a harpooned whale, of somebody listening to a huge radio, of a hunter shooting birds in a tree,[38] of an ejaculating superman (see photo7), of a beach seine with a big catch, and of an angel praying in front of a candle. These pictures can be compared with the 'names', for they express a similar range of things and let the canoe 'speak' (to both humans and god[s]) in a related way.[39] In a sense they can be seen as a variation on a theme, this time using realistic images instead of texts and pictograms. Since Coronel mentioned that he only saw two prow decorations along Ghana's coast in the

1970s (see note 27) one cannot but conclude that we are dealing here with a rather recent development concerning canoe decoration. And this raises the question about what can be said about the decorations in historical perspective. When did which kind of 'designs' appear and is it possible to say something about their origins? In the following paragraph I will briefly deal with these issues.

Canoe Decorations in Historical Perspective

In the few rather recent articles dealing with canoe decorations one does not find much with regard to these decorations in the past, let alone their development over time.[40] This is not surprising. Though canoes have been described by all kinds of visitors of the Gold Coast in the past, their reports, at least the ones I have seen, hardly contain data on their decorations. However, in a publication of 1748 which contains a compilation of earlier travel reports on the Gold Coast one can read this: 'La grossièreté des Négres n'empêche pas qu'ils ne recherchent l'ornement dans leurs Canots. Ils ont l'art de les peindre en dedans & en dehors' (*Histoire Générale des Voyages*, etc. 1748:218). So it seems that the practice to beautify canoes is an age-old custom. In order to find out what kind of designs were used in the past I have carefully studied the illustrations (engravings as well as photographs) in books published before the twentieth century looking for decorated canoes, but to no avail. Though some of these illustrations clearly show the continuity of the form of the dugouts over time, they 'tell' nothing about their decoration. However, on a few photographs, probably taken in the beginning of the twentieth century, decorated canoes can be seen. Balmer, who worked in Ghana between 1907 and 1911, published one photo in a book (1926: facing p. 64). It shows canoes on the beach of Elmina (in the Fanti area) that almost all wear the 'fishtail-teeth' motif on the bow. And *A Short Manual of the Gold Coast* by Rattray (1924) contains a picture of canoes on the beach of Osu near castle Christiansborg, nowadays the landing place of almost 70 hook-and-line canoes. This picture is very interesting, for it not only shows canoes with the same motif, but also one canoe with a written text! With a little bit of effort one can decipher *Abdeeshien* on its gunwale.[41]

On the basis of these sources I dare say that the use of pictograms in combination with slogans at least goes back to the beginning of the twentieth century.[42] For the twenties and thirties I have found a handful of pictures of more or less richly decorated canoes moored at different landing beaches along Ghana's coast. Since they are also taken at the same place as the picture in Rattray's publication, I only want to mention the photographs in Redmayne (1938:74) and *The Golden Shore Magazine of the Diocese of Accra* (1939, VIII, 5: facing p. 460). Especially the former is interesting, for on it one sees a canoe with a design in combination with a written text of a type which still occurs, that is, *We Are Looking Unto God. U[nited] A[frica] C[ompany]*). But this is not all. In the caption Redmayne writes: 'Note the mottoes on the surf-boats…' Though the canoes on the picture might have been in use as 'surf-boats', they do not differ much from the big dugouts of the fishermen. It is possible that Redmayne mistook them for 'surf-boats'. However, if he is right, then this could be relevant for tracing the origin of the written texts on the canoes of the

fishermen. The 'surf-boats' as they were introduced by the British in the second half of the nineteenth century, were of a particular type and might have had numbers and/or texts ('names') on their bows and/or gunwales.[43] Alas, the picture of 'surf-boats' on the beach at Cape Coast in Macdonald (1898: facing p. 185) is too vague to be revealing. With regard to this, further research could be relevant. But next to the British 'surf boats' the freighters which anchored in the absence of proper ports far before the heavy surf – reason why other crafts were absolutely necessary to bring their cargo ashore –,[44] may have been a source of inspiration for putting particular symbols and texts on canoes. The occurrence of the abbreviation 's.s.' ('steam ship') on one of the canoes lying next to the *We Are Looking Unto God* on the picture in Redmayne's book seems to support this hypothesis. In the 1990s owners still called their canoes 's.s.' so-and-so.

Conclusion

I hope to have made clear that there is not one way to 'read' the pictograms, written texts, and paintings as they occur on the canoes in the Ga speaking area. This is an immediate consequence of the fact that they are very succinct, symbolic expressions of a wide range of relations, identifications and sympathies of their owners with things, fellow human beings and ideas. The decorations are chosen from a big reservoir of possibilities and carefully composed into what one could call a distinctive, decorative *Gestalt*, so that each canoe gets just like its owner a recognizable identity (not to say individuality) amongst other, similarly treated canoes. A beach with moored canoes can be considered as a revealing materialization of the social community of the fishermen owning these precious means of production. The canoes are their messengers and talk for them, they show the diversification of their mindscape and tell a lot about how they relate to each other and the world they live in (or to their manscape and landscape). In this connection it is good to emphasize a distinction between insiders and outsiders. The former are familiar with the repertoires, whereas the latter are not. That the insiders are familiar with these repertoires does not mean, however, that they know all their components and that they all decode these components in the same way, for that is evidently not the case. What counts is that they all recognize these repertoires as theirs and in doing so express their belonging to the world of the Ghanaian fishery. So the decorations function on the one hand to express all kinds of differences amongst fishermen and on the other between fishermen and non-fishermen. This does not mean that the way fishermen decorate their means of production and how others such as trotro-, taxi- and lorry-drivers do are unconnected. Coronel has pointed out that '[T]here is continual competition and pressure among owners of canoes, chop-bars, and lorries to decorate with the most recent products and popular ideas' (1979:58). The totemistic principle works in ever widening circles one could say. An interesting question in this connection is where the widespread practice in Ghana to decorate crucial material objects, especially canoes and cars, with written texts has its origins. Right now I have the idea that it might be possible that this long-standing custom found its way from the beaches inland. Already a long time ago fishermen must have been

inspired not only by what Coronel calls traditional iconography 'primarily based on Ghanaian proverbs', but also by a much more varied number of sources. For instance, texts, names and/or numbers on both the European ships visiting Ghana's coastal waters and the different type of craft, such as sloops and boats, in use to bring persons and goods to and from the shore. It is highly probable that the long standing and intensive contacts with Europeans and their ways to decorate ships went hand in hand with a specific appropriation or creolization (cf. Hoetink 1962:228/29) process amongst the coastal population of what was to become Ghana in the second half of the 20th century. Instead of putting names in the way we understand them on their dugouts, the fishermen and 'surf-boat' crews supposedly started with the writing or carving out of proverbs, formerly only represented by particular pictograms, and texts inspired by the bible. As a result the very typical combination of texts and pictograms must have come about, which later, in particular after World War II, when the use of cars for goods and persons rapidly expanded, was also applied to let these vehicles speak, this time to a much broader public. I think that it makes little sense to qualify the pictograms as 'traditional' and the texts as 'modern'. This distinction can easily lead to the wrong idea that the pictograms consist of an age-old, limited, static and pure collection of Fanti or Ga designs. This is implausible, for some have totally disappeared, whereas others were borrowed and endowed with new meanings as well as newly invented. The anchor-arrow-motif might illustrate this.

Let me conclude with the observation that the Ghanaian fishermen are no exception to the 'rule' which says that human beings tend to treat crucial means of production not as sheer objects but instead are inclined to transform them into a specific kind of subjects, 'companions' or 'collaborators', for instance, by decorating them abundantly and giving them 'names' and sometimes even food.

Notes

[1] I am grateful to Derek Johnson, Birgit Meyer, Thomas Nyaku and Kodjo Senah for their critical comments on this essay. I also like to thank Francis Agyei and Bra Kodjo who helped me with the collection of data.

[2] 'The first fishing trawler to be built in the Gold Coast was named recently with considerable celebration. It has been built by a retired African barrister at a cost of £ 4000…' (*The Crown Colonist. Review of the Colonial Empire*, October 1949 No. 215, Vol. 19).

[3] See, for instance, Eyeson (n.d.) and Lawson and Kwei (1974) for the coming into existence of the non-artisanal sector and Surgy (1969) for a history of the artisanal sector.

[4] To save fuel fishermen still use paddles and sails.

[5] In order to keep out water these canoes often have 'weatherboards in the bow, planks raised two or more feet…' as Burton already observed in the 19th century (1863, Vol. 2:66)

[6] See Gulbrandsen (1991:5, 78) for very precise descriptions of the *Poli* and *Watsa* purse seines and how they are used.

[7] These are classifications as they occur in the Ghana Canoe Frame Surveys. The fishermen not always use these classifications, but slightly different ones. When I asked, for instance, one of the chief fishermen of Jamestown Beach, Accra, to draw sketches of the main canoe types he distinguished between *Poli/Watsa*, Hook/*Anifa* and *Ali* canoes, the former being the biggest (14 mtrs) and the latter the smallest (10 mtrs). An interesting distinction is the one between 'go-come-canoes', which are used for the day fishery, and 'la-gaz-canoes' (from the French word 'la glace', ice), which stay at sea for a number of days and have ice boxes aboard.

[8] This seems to be exaggerated, for it is reasonable to assume that the Ga and the Ewe knew how to catch fish. Perhaps the Fanti introduced particular techniques to them.

[9] See Smith (1970) for a historical sketch of the role of canoes in West Africa.

[10] Others were Axxim, Boutri, Takoradi, Commenda and Winneba (cf. *Histoire générale des voyages* 1748).

[11] According to Sheves these teams can be classified into three categories: 'sedentary, indigenous part-time carvers and farmers; formerly migrant carvers now sedentary, part-time carvers and farmers; and highly migratory full time carvers' (1991:10/11).

[12] I got this story in hand writing from a housekeeper of the chalets of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. I was unable to trace where it was published.

[13] Unfortunately I did not ask on which basis the sex of a tree was determined.

[14] The frequency and emphasis with which the different movements, strength and power of male canoes were mentioned gives me the idea that there really exists a difference in quality and characteristics between male and female wawa trees. Some fishermen talked about the big size canoes as male and the small(er) ones as female, which is a bit remarkable, for out of one tree of 1.8 m diameter and 30 m length a 15 m and a 9 m canoe can be made (see Gulbrandsen 1991:79).

[15] One needs to realize that owners can be both men and women and that they are not always active in the fishing business themselves. Women never go out at sea but they let their craft be used by a *bosun* and his crew against a specific share of the catch.

[16] See Brown (1947:42) for the way in which a new canoe was treated in La before WW II and Nunoo (1975:32) and Coronel (1979) for the same in the 1970s.

[17] This informant was an unemployed man with a great network in the fisherman's world. Through him I invested a small amount of money in a particular canoe at Osu. In return for this investment I sometimes got some fish and information, for example, a tape with conversations recorded by him when I was in the Netherlands. After I came back we listened together to this tape and he explained in great detail what the conversation was all about.

[18] The chief fisherman of La once said to me that he would never go out in a canoe after having slept with a woman, for that would bring him bad luck.

[19] It is said that they also put fetishes in their nets. To use fetishes inside canoes is an old custom, for this is already mentioned in the 17th century (cf. *Histoire générale des voyages*, 1748).

[20] According to Coronel the fetishes consist of sacred bundles prepared by a herbalist and are hidden in holes drilled into the side of the bow (1979:54)

[21] It was often said that Florida water was one of these liquids.

[22] Copies (printed in the USA) can be bought at particular places in Jamestown, Accra, for exorbitant prices.

[23] The same attitude exists among Ghanaian taxi drivers towards their vehicles (cf. Verrips and Meyer 2000). However, it should be emphasized, that it thus concerns a very general way of dealing with important pieces of material culture. Dutch bargemen, for instance, perceived their craft as female beings and treated them accordingly (Verrips 1990).

[24] 'Ka Shi Me' is Ga and means 'Never Leave Me.'

[25] The same holds true for J. Francis' unpublished paper 'Construction and decoration of canoes in Ghana', written for the Winneba Training College.

[26] In fact Coronel starts with making a contrast between traditional iconography 'based on Ghanaian proverbs' and an iconography 'drawn from topical, contemporary sources', which 'seem to have *always* been present' (1979:56; italics JV). Since immediately thereafter he writes about 'modern iconography' one cannot but conclude that he meant with this type of iconography the one based on 'topical, contemporary sources'. It would have been wise, if he had expressed himself more carefully, for the combination of 'contemporary', 'always', and 'modern' is a bit confusing, to say the least.

[27] This practice shows a great family resemblance with the custom among Dutch bargemen who, after buying a second hand barge, paint a new name over an old relief name.

[28] Perhaps this remarkable fact is a consequence of my style of doing research and interviewing people. I did not work with structured interviews.

[29] Coronel, who explicitly mentions this pictogram, does not say anything about its possible origin and

for it takes a long time to die. *Sankofa* is a traditional representation of interlocutory discourse between the past and the present

[33] I am most grateful for the fact that the officials of the GNCFC, which has its main office in Accra, gave me permission to copy a lot of the lists pertaining to the (almost fifty) landing beaches in the Volta Region.

[34] Sometimes brothers give the same name to their canoes but with consecutive numbers, for example, *Bookmen No 1, 2, 3*, and *4*. But see Coronel who mentions that numbers carved on the gunwales of canoes often refer to specific *asafo* (or military) companies in a community (1979:58).

[35] Other interesting names with a political connotation are, for instance, *Abe* not only the word for palm nut fruit but also the emblem of a political party (the PNP of the Third Republic), and *Agege* 'alluding to the exodus of Ghanaians to Nigeria to find green pastures'.

[36] These are all translations of my assistant, Francis Agyei.

[37] In this connection the following observation by Coronel seems to be relevant: 'I found only two examples of prow decoration is coastal Ghana. The most dramatic took the form of a stylized shark head, which is thought to invest the canoe with the shark's ability to find schools of fish; the owner explained, "The shark is a strong fish which catches many fish, just as my canoe does"' (1979:58).

[38] I found this painting which clearly compares a fishermen with a bird hunter fascinating, because it not only points to the sometimes striking family resemblance between birds and fishes (for instance, expressed in the *onufu-sankofa* design on canoes), but also to the tree as a mediating element between the two species. If one realizes that some trees are dependent for their reproduction on the transport of their seeds by birds first and fishes later, then the use of dugouts in the fisheries suddenly gets an extra dimension at a deeper level which I can not deal with here.

[39] The paintings show a remarkable family resemblance with the paintings military pilots sometimes put on their aircraft. It might even be possible that the latter once functioned as a source of inspiration. Some names used for canoes, such as, *Jombo Jet*, *KLM* and *Ghana Airways*, as well as the occurrence of images of airplanes on gunwales point in the direction of at least a comparison between the two types of vehicles.

[40] This pertains at least to the pieces I read. It might be possible that, for instance, Coronel in his M.A Thesis (1975) - which I could not trace - deals with the history.

[41] None of the Ghanaians I asked for a translation could tell me what this letter combination meant. One guessed that it might mean something like: 'you did not finish your studies'.

[42] When I interviewed the assistant of the chief fisherman of Osu and his linguist in 1991 they said that one started with writing 'names' on canoes 35 years before, that is, around 1955! They apparently were not well informed, though they claimed to know the name of the fisherman with whom it all began.

[43] 'Since the commencement of the Ashánti disturbance … communication with the land has been facilitated by the introduction of "surf boats", constructed for this special duty…' (Allen 1874:11)

[44] Ever since Europeans visited the Gold Coast they relied on the indigenous population living along the coast bringing goods and persons to and from the shore in their dugouts. Gradually it even became a kind of special profession to do this. See, for instance, Gordon: 'Another class of canoemen devote themselves more or less to the transport of goods and passengers to and from vessels at anchor in the "roads"…' (1874:45).

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Piracy in Southeast Asia
A Historical Comparison

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Abstract The last decade has witnessed in Southeast Asia an upsurge of piracy. Especially worrisome is the growing interconnectedness of this phenomenon with other forms of international crime and with politically motivated insurgencies. There has been no lack of (scholarly) attention for this situation. Less well known is the fact that during the nineteenth century several colonial governments in Southeast Asia, but especially the Dutch, were confronted with piracy on a very large scale. This article tries to elucidate the present situation by drawing comparisons with the past experiences of the Dutch. Special attention is paid to the process of state formation and to the international context of both piracy and piracy fighting.

Introduction

In the nineteenth century fighting piracy was no easy task for the Dutch and other colonial governments in the Far East. This is not to say that before that period piracy posed no problems. On the contrary, this phenomenon casts long shadows backwards in Southeast Asia. It was closely related there to the rivalry between native political communities. These fought each other in constantly changing coalitions, trade and piracy accompanying this pattern as two sides of the same coin. Efforts at enrichment and political enlargement took then this, then that form, while the same held good for the activities of individual seafarers. Specialisation in one of these directions was another possibility, of course, the choice being influenced among other factors by the environment. A state, for instance, that passed through succession troubles offered its neighbours ample opportunities for (political) mischief, making for a situation in which piracy could flourish. Not surprisingly under such circumstances, this phenomenon was closely intertwined with political motives. To enrich one-self meant hurting rivals, and the line dividing piracy from privateering never was a clear-cut one. Pirates, moreover, wanted to sell their plunder and captives. They consequently were always in need of commercial contacts and political protection. Who profited most from these relations cannot be ascertained in general terms. In any case, if the pirates thought their interests suffered, they could always chose other receivers and political protectors. They could even change the area of their depredations. After all, in Southeast Asia seafarers – be they traders, pirates and/or privateers – always belonged to geographically mobile communities. All over the region they had founded settlements in which they could take refuge if need arose.

In this way piracy was connected to at least two circumstances. On the one hand to political instability, on the other hand to trade, which offered opportunities

for plunder. These two factors as such had nothing to do with the presence or absence in Southeast Asia of European trading companies. Consequently, it is incorrect to see piracy, or its increase, as connected to their monopolistic practices. Piracy preceded the arrival of these companies, while the native trade was not without its monopolistic leanings. Besides, the areas covered by the companies' monopoly were for a long time too restricted to account for such a ubiquitous phenomenon as piracy. Still, the transformation of the trading companies into territorial states started a process that – for the time being at least – brought piracy to its end. A territorial state, after all, is in general averse to harbouring within its borders migrating communities. People without a stable residence and/or occupation escape efforts at control, taxation, conscription, jurisdiction, et cetera. This aversion even characterises states that are ruled by (semi-) nomadic elites. What these ruling groups permit themselves, they withhold from subjugated people. This tendency to bind migrating communities to the soil certainly held good for nineteenth century colonial governments. They rightly saw measures taken to this end as instrumental to fighting piracy. The government started with forcing pirates to more peripheral and less attractive hunting grounds. Next, it offered them a kind of collective amnesty, on condition that they gave up their wandering habits and chose a sedentary occupation. By forcing them in this direction, the government succeeded moreover in severing the bonds that connected the pirates to receivers and their political protectors. It needs no comment that this development left these latter groups in a more vulnerable position. The colonial government, in other words, killed two birds with one stone. It cornered the pirates as well as their assistants and profiteers.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century this colonial policy began to bear fruit, in the East Indies as well as in the neighbouring British and Spanish possessions. Moreover, the colonial governments took care not to slacken their grip. After World War II their native successors all were anxious to continue working along these lines. Still, piracy rears its head again in Southeast Asia. The circumstances under which piracy happens and its forms are new. Yet, its reappearance in this part of the world is a disturbing, though interesting development. It raises questions both to its present characteristics and how it compares to nineteenth century piracy. All the same, in most recent accounts the historical-comparative view is almost completely lacking. An explanation for this omission perhaps is that people, interested in present-day piracy have a legal, economic or police background, or have their roots in the world of insurance, security, ship owners or seafarer' unions. Such people view piracy from a restricted, professional angle. The same holds true for (Western) naval organisations. These are mainly interested in the question: is piracy grave enough to justify the use of military means?

Important as these viewpoints are, they stand to win from the comparative perspective. For this, however, additional data are needed - of an anthropological and criminological kind. True, information about the activities of the pirates – their *public appearance* – is available. What is missing, are facts about their organisations, international ramifications, culture, management style, financial support structure, patterns of expenditure, forms of recruitment and relations to receivers and officials in legal, police or harbour circles. Granted, data about these matters are not easy to obtain. Just as in the nineteenth century only a few sources can be tapped to this

purpose: first, interrogations of captured or turncoat pirates (especially useful if they belonged to leadership circles); second, interviews of people who lived some time as captives among the pirates, but who made good their escape or were ransomed or exchanged. Without more data from these sources, the fight against piracy is not unlike an uphill struggle. Without these data any historical comparison will lack an even basis. If such a comparison nevertheless is the object of this paper, it will be evident that it can offer no more than a tentative beginning. On the other hand, this try is not aimed at trivialities. Comparisons after all are an excellent tool to bring historical data into sharper focus, while their relevance for policy implementation should not be underestimated.

The Nineteenth Century

In this period piracy confronted the Dutch colonial government in Southeast Asia in three different ways (Kniphorst n.d.; Warren 1981; Trocki 1979). The first two resembled each other closely and differed only in scale. Both followed the classical pattern of piracy in that they directed their depredations against other regular users of the seas: fishermen and traders. In the first variety piracy was only a part time activity, as many traders and fishermen were, after all, not averse against robbing their colleagues if an opportunity to do so presented itself. Still, these people were no specialists and in most cases did not aspire to become full time pirates. In several places, however, notably on the Riau and Lingga islands, just to the south of Singapore, the second variety blossomed. Here, specialized pirate communities came into existence, in which the local elite was heavily involved. These islands were strategically situated astride several busy trade routes. Consequently, the pirates were not in fear here of killing the golden eggs laying hens. Traders had to make lengthy detours to avoid the Riau-Lingga archipelago and most took a calculated risk with the pirates, always hoping to reach their destinations safely.

The pirates on the whole seldom tried to capture European trading vessels. The means to do so were not absent, but the certainty of retaliation by the Dutch or British government functioned as a rather effective break on such an exploit. When native or Chinese traders fell victim to the pirates, the colonial authorities were, of course, disturbed. Still, in this case their reaction was somewhat more restrained, owing to the following considerations. First, during the first decades of the nineteenth century the sultanates of Riau-Lingga still enjoyed a considerable degree of independence. Neither the British nor the Dutch were as yet prepared to place these principalities under direct rule or even close supervision. More important, both colonial governments claimed parts of these islands and were afraid that an independently undertaken anti-pirate campaign might hurt their diplomatic relations. Commercially, the Dutch and British were engaged in a fierce competition. Both feared that, by vigorously fighting piracy, the rival was penetrating and taking hold of the disputed archipelago. So deeply suspicious were they of each other's intentions that combined expeditions were out of the question. Of course, the pirates profited from this colonial rivalry. As long as the Dutch and British were at loggerheads, they need not fear an effective naval and military campaign against their stronghold.

The third variety in which piracy manifested itself in Southeast Asia was the most dangerous and inflicted the greatest damage. Strictly speaking, however, it was not a true form of piracy at all. That is to say, the sea robbers did not roam the high seas, but sought their prey mainly in the coastal areas of the islands. They were after slaves, to be sold on the markets in, among other places, the Sulu sultanate - an archipelago to the Northeast of Borneo, between the Dutch, British and Spanish spheres of influence. These Sulu pirates practiced their depredations on a grand scale and were for a long time able to withstand all counter measures. So harmful was the effect of their slave-raiding exploits that several coastal areas were depopulated, as the inhabitants fled to the relative safety of more protected inland regions. To understand this phenomenon it is necessary to shed the idea of an over-populated Southeast Asia. With the exception of Java this part of the world was in the nineteenth century only thinly populated, while the demand for agricultural and domestic labour was rather high, certainly on the part of the elite. Slaves, moreover, lent prestige to their owner. So, slave raiding was a very profitable branch of the regional economy, and the Sulu pirates made a specialty of it. Whole communities, including the sultan's court, were engaged in it. The elite financed the expeditions; the local people manned the vessels, and slaves looked after the fishing industry and agriculture during their owner's absence.

To look upon this kind of piracy simply as an economic activity, is however to miss several important points. To the Sulu robbers, it also was a traditional and prestigious way of life. It was a means, moreover, to stress their independence from the neighbouring, and threatening, Dutch, Spanish and British colonial governments. In their exploits there was, in other words, an element of political protest and consequently of privateering. They saw their raiding activities as a means of resistance against external, non-Muslim forces and of harming the prestige and power of these enemies. These pirates sailed in large fleets of well-manned vessels. Their expeditions regularly took a year to complete, in which they used both the monsoon winds and several dependencies along their routes. Using these communities of kinsmen and local helpers, they were seldom in need of intelligence, repair facilities, food, drinking water, and hiding places. Like their colleagues in the Riau-Lingga area, these pirates were protected, moreover, by the reluctance of the several colonial authorities to press their counter-campaigns for fear of provoking diplomatic tensions among themselves. Every time one of them conducted a vigorous pursuit and followed the pirates into their lairs, the others protested against such trespassing. In this way, the pirates were never really cornered. They simply absorbed their losses and quickly recovered to continue their depredations.

Not surprisingly, the colonial governments at first considered piracy in Southeast Asia to be a naval problem (Teitler 2000; Tagliacozzo 2000). What hampered this approach were the following factors. First, it proved to be impossible to discipline the local and regional traders into adopting – as a defensive measure – the age-old and successful convoy system. Second, the colonial naval forces were always too thinly spread to effectively patrol the enormous distances involved. Their intelligence system, moreover, simply was no match for that of the pirates, who intimately knew the trade routes, the hiding places, and the areas where best to capture slaves. Third, military measures to seal off the coastal areas from pirates intent on slave

raiding were too expensive to contemplate on a really grand scale. Re-locating the potential victims to inland areas was a step, moreover, the colonial authorities were only very reluctant to consider. It would, after all, admit their defeat in protecting the lives and properties of their subjects. It would symbolise their failure as colonial overlords. Fourth, the anti-piracy campaigns of the colonial naval forces were, paradoxically, conducted on too large a scale to make an impression on the opponent. As in counter-guerrilla operations, regular military forces – even when equipped with modern technology – are too unwieldy and inflexible to achieve success. Only slowly did the colonial forces recognize that anti-piracy campaigns, like counter-insurgency, ask for unorthodox approaches that do not emphasize military measures.

In the end the only really effective answer to piracy was to conquer and occupy the places from which it originated. These areas had to be permanently controlled. Good governance had to be introduced here, and the local population to be continually supervised. As with efforts to wean drugs producing peasants from their trade, it was essential, moreover, to offer the former pirates attractive economic alternatives and live-styles in order to prevent them from falling back into old habits. Another prerequisite for success was that the Dutch, Spanish and British authorities finally agreed as to the exact location of the lines separating their spheres of interest. Only when, for instance, the Dutch admitted that the Sulu zone did not fall under their responsibility, was it possible for the Spanish government in Manilla to completely subdue the sultanate and eradicate piracy there. The same process helped to put an end to piracy in the Riau-Lingga archipelago when the British colonial authorities (though not the private British traders in Singapore) admitted that these islands belonged to the Dutch East Indies. After that the Dutch could finally make a start with putting an anti-piracy policy into effect.

Recent Developments

It is beside the point to blame the end of the Cold War for the upsurge of piracy in Southeast Asia. True, the last few years brought an increase of this phenomenon, but piracy was reportedly on the rise years before this conflict came to its end. Still, the impression lingers that piracy, together with other forms of organised crime, was boosted by energies that formerly were held in check by the East-West confrontation. Part of the explanation no doubt is the attention recently paid to piracy by the media. This in itself is possibly connected to concerns about the extremely serious consequences for the local environment that can result from piracy-induced shipping disasters. Still, there is more to it than only the influence of the media. Their public no doubt is quickly bored. Its attention can certainly be captured by reports about – to outsiders – adventurous or even romantic exploits of pirates. On the other hand, the problem is real enough and rightly draws the attention of the international community. Piracy is responsible for rising economic and financial damage, to countries as well as to the international shipping industry. Piracy claims an increasing number of victims. Piracy eludes for the time being any efforts to fight it. The danger it poses to the environment, moreover, is real enough. In addition, the countries that are bound to suffer in case of a shipping disaster are too poor to carry

its financial consequences.

On a yearly basis, more than half of the world's seagoing traffic passes through Southeast Asia. The (until now) piracy-free detour around Australia and New-Guinea costs time and fuel and is therefore not attractive to the shipping industry. Besides, the aforementioned traffic is not simply a combination of a great number of small vessels. Annually, more than ten thousand ships of more than ten thousand tons cross the area in a northerly direction, more than six thousand in the opposite direction (Keynan 2000; World Wide Maritime Policy n.d.; *NRC-Handelsblad* 1-8-2000).[1] These numbers are easy to explain. In and around Southeast Asia some of the most densely populated countries of the world are located, a few of which (Japan, Taiwan, Singapore) can pride themselves on strong national economies that are dependent on much import and export. Other national economies are considerably weaker, but only peripheral North Korea seeks its national power in aloofness from the world markets. Peoples' Republics like China and Vietnam no longer follow this path. Some countries in Southeast Asia, moreover, produce minerals and agricultural products that are much in need elsewhere, both inside and outside of the area. Their national economies are to a considerable degree dependent on exporting these minerals and products and, consequently, on shipping. To all this seagoing business, fisheries and coastal traffic (both large and small scale) must be added. Together these various commercial activities make Southeast Asia the area with the busiest shipping in the world. The other side of this medal, of course, is that pirates are never short here of opportunities for plunder. They have, moreover, geography on their side. An enormous number of islands are available for their use as hiding places and bases from which to sortie. The distance, moreover, from these island bases to the place of the crime is never long. The logistics and security of the pirates is of course helped by these circumstances. The limited distance starkly reduces the time during which they have to expose themselves. Besides, the climate (during part of the year) and these short distances enable the pirates to carry on their business with relatively small ships. These vessels are easy to hide, something that is also made possible by the dense vegetation on most of the islands. The fact that there are less and less sailors aboard trading vessels forms another factor that makes life easy for the pirates.

A faltering economy is a further stimulus, the more so as a country's peripheral parts suffer more from this slump than the centre. In these parts, piracy not only forms a welcome additional source of income, it can also be an expression of protest against a distant, indifferent and failing government. At this point it is important to underscore the following two points. First, that for most countries in Southeast Asia secure (and consequently busy) sea-lanes form one of the most important means to hold the state together. Whenever these sea-lanes are imperilled, it is likely that a process will start in which more and more centrifugal forces will exert themselves. Even when piracy is at the outset nothing but an economic phenomenon, it will in this process eventually have political consequences. Second, that pirates - like other economically oriented criminals - cannot survive without the help of receivers, a market on which to dispose of their plunder, and a friendly community that assists them with moral and material means. Moreover, the more bulky and expensive the plunder is, the greater the chance that the pirates stand in need of connections to the

respectable *upper world*. In this respect too the conclusion must be that what starts as an economic offence, in due time can have political consequences (Peterson 1989, 1995; Chalk 1998a).

In Southeast Asia representatives of the *upper world* are indeed under the suspicion of seeking and having contacts with communities of pirates. It is too far-fetched, however, to always see in these politically motivated power players people, who are in some devious way connected to secession movements. This can be the case. More often than not, however, these persons are only corrupt and interested in financial gain. Political and financial motives, however, do not always cancel each other out. Secession movements are not always composed of fanatics, willing to endure hardships for their ideals. With violent robberies and hostage taking, they vent their frustrations and protests. The income they draw from these activities is welcome: to buy weapons, to reward their followers with, but also to spend on the good things of this world. The line differentiating secession and resistance fighters from pirates is not always easy to draw (Chalk 1998a, 1998b; NRC *Handelsblad* 4-5-2000). The same reservation applies to the line between the latter and corrupt officials, bureaucrats and businessmen. One point, however, must be absolutely clear: all these phenomena only occur in *weak or failed states*. In other ways too these states are vulnerable to the dangers emanating from piracy. Their weakness or failure is an expression of a faltering political centralisation. Connected to this feature is a rather marked sensitivity as regards their sovereignty.

Their willingness to co-operate with neighbouring countries in the fight against piracy can suffer from this sensitivity. This co-operation can force them to grant these neighbours certain powers, for instance the right to pursue (with coast guard, police or even naval vessels) pirates who try to seek shelter in the territorial waters of the first state. In Southeast Asia this willingness to co-operate is at present rather small indeed. Several factors can account for this hesitancy. First, there is the reluctance to demonstrate in this way one's own political and administrative weakness. The weaker the state, the more reluctant it often shows itself to co-operate with its neighbours. Second, there are many maritime border disputes between the countries in this part of the world. They show themselves most reluctant to settle these differences and are ready to use even military force to defend what they see as their rights. Not surprisingly, under these circumstances they are most eager to keep foreign coast guard or police vessels at a distance. The third factor relates to the minorities that most countries in the region lodge on their territories. Central authorities often suspect these groups of co-operating with neighbouring countries, the more so of course when and where these neighbours have the same ethnic, religious or ideological background as the minorities (Keynan 2000). Pirates stand to profit from these suspicions. If members of minority groups, who feel discriminated against, indulge in this practice, they will expect, if not sympathy, then at least some assistance from their companions in distress. There are indications that do point to the working of this social mechanism. It can also help explain the ease with which pirate communities sometimes spread out over the area. Their effectiveness and chances to survive increase dramatically by this international proliferation.

The reluctance of the countries in the region to co-operate against pirates, presents these rogues in effect with sanctuaries. Too weak themselves to patrol exten-

sive coastal areas in border regions, government forces nevertheless refuse colleagues from neighbouring countries entrance to hunt pirates down here. The new (third) United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, in force since 1994) aggravates this problem. Most countries in Southeast Asia now avail themselves of the opportunity to claim before their coasts and around their islands an Exclusive Economic Zone (of two hundred nautical miles). They lay claim, moreover, to distant and uninhabited islands, send gunboats thither, open fire in rivals, destroy rival symbols of sovereignty there and attract foreign companies with concessions to look for minerals. The tensions that grow out of these activities are ill suited to stimulate international co-operation against piracy. On the contrary, pirates only profit from the strained international relations in the area. Another UNCLOS III-regulation that works in their favour is the extension of the territorial sea from three to twelve nautical miles. Most instances of piracy now occur in this zone and only the coastal state can legally deal here with the depredations (Steel 1996). External forces can offer their assistance, but are only allowed to interfere when invited to lend a hand by the coastal state. If this latter authority refuses outside help, the international community is powerless to do anything against the rogues, who – according to international law – now can no longer even be labelled *pirates* (For this, after all, it is necessary for them to operate outside territorial waters.)

Data on the first six months of 2000 indicate that, world wide, only one in five cases of *piracy* do occur on the high seas. In Southeast Asia this proportion is even lower. This situation further enhances the importance of international co-operation. After all, Indonesia and the Philippines are, by themselves, too weak to effectively suppress piracy. It is especially in Indonesian waters that this phenomenon is on the increase the last few years (Chalk 1998b). Still, it manifests itself here on a rather small scale, while the pirates prefer to operate in the neighbourhood of harbours, roadstead and sea straits. They use relatively little violence, keeping the number of dead and wounded among their victims rather low. Operating with small craft, among them fishing boats, the pirates here are after money and movable goods of high value. Until recently, the seas around the Malaya peninsula formed another preferred pirate haunt. Pressured, however, by one of the few instances of international co-operation the criminals moved on to the South China Sea (Peterson 1995).

There appears, on the whole, to be little difference between the way in which piracy manifests itself in Indonesian waters and around Malaya, the latter case showing, however, more instances of violence. The Malaya piracy was more dangerous for still another reason. The perpetrators often left their victims in a condition in which they were unable to properly look after the ship. Under these circumstances, it is surprising that until now no large-scale collisions or beachings have occurred and that no harm has been done to the environment. The Strait of Malacca, after all, is one of the busiest sea traffic lanes in the world, rather difficult to navigate, moreover, even in normal times. The piracy haunt in the South China Sea is known as the *Honkong-Luzon-Hainan* triangle. The crime manifests itself here in two varieties. Firstly, operations conducted with much violence, the pirates using small coastal craft or boats launched from *mother ships*. In this case the pirates are mainly after the cargo of their prey, the personnel belongings of their victims forming but an extra income. The pirates are not interested in the victim's ship proper. After having completed the

operation, they let it drift to a beach or hand it over to those of their victims who have survived the attack. In the second variety the pirates concentrate on the ships of their victims. In this case they, of course, leave no survivors behind. The complete ship (with its cargo) disappears. It afterwards obtains a new identity and starts a new life under a new name, a different crew, forged papers and some changes in its external appearance. This last variety, of course, is the one on the grandest scale. It calls for a sophisticated organisation, international contacts and ample financial means. It cannot operate, moreover, without extensive help from the *upper world*.

Counter Measures

It has long been recognised that to fight piracy international co-operation is needed. Evidence of this insight is the International Maritime Bureau (IMB). Founded in 1981 by the Board of the International Chamber of Commerce, this Bureau directs its activities – with help from the United Nations' sponsored International Maritime Organisation – on the prevention, restriction and fight of criminal business surrounding sea transport. The IMB has instituted a Kuala Lumpur based Piracy Centre, that operates as an intelligence agency, mediates between national security services, advises the shipping industry and sailors' unions, and assists with the recovery of stolen property (Ellen 1989). Important as the IMB and Piracy Centre are, direct co-operation between the countries in Southeast Asia forms an indispensable tool in any anti-piracy campaign. For some time it looked like the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) could help in this respect. Of late, however, this Forum is less and less heard of. Probably, the economic and internal problems recently troubling many ASEAN-countries are responsible for this slack. On their side, for the near future, nothing more seems possible in the fight against piracy than bi- or trilateral contacts. Examples of these are the co-operation between Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, between Malaysia and the Philippines, and between Vietnam and Thailand.

If agreements between these countries allow the participants to operate (with coast guard, police and naval craft) in each other's waters, much will have been won. Experience shows that these agreements form an important anti-piracy instrument. When, moreover, the participating countries restrain themselves when making use of this right of *hot pursuit*, a foundation is probably laid for other forms of co-operation. These might go in the direction of including larger and larger geographical areas in the agreements. Another possibility for the co-operating countries is to better attune the anti-piracy procedures in their administration of justice. These countries might even agree to extradite captured pirates to the state that suffered most from their depredations (Goodman 1999). Effective as these measures might be, it is not to be expected that ASEAN countries will soon agree following this path. Realising this reluctance, Japan recently has taken some interesting initiatives to involve these states in its anti-piracy plans. If ASEAN does not stir itself into action, indeed some outside stimulus is perhaps needed to accomplish this feat. One can sympathise in his respect with Japan. Most of its sea-lanes of communication pass through the endangered zones, while it disposes of ample means to combat the

piracy problem on its own. Remarkably, until now Japan has managed to restrain itself. It does not push the ASEAN countries too hard and offers to lead them in the co-ordination of their coast guards, while keeping its naval forces in the background. It realises all too well that – seeing to its World War II record in the region – such an overreaction would probably stifle any positive reaction from the countries in Southeast Asia (NRC *Handelsblad* 29-4-2000).[2]

Until now the Japanese initiative has only elicited a lukewarm reaction. China in particular seems to be unresponsive. Four considerations possibly influence this negative reception by the Chinese: first, mistrust of the leading role that Japan might claim in an anti-piracy campaign; second, rejection of the prospect of having to co-operate – even in the non-political context of this campaign – with coast guard or even naval forces of Taiwan; third, rejection of the claims many countries in the region extend to island groups in the South China Sea: fourth, fears that an effective anti-piracy campaign unmasks Chinese officials as accomplices of the criminals. Whether such suspicions are indeed well founded is still not proven. Hard facts to incriminate Chinese bureaucrats are still missing, but voices can be heard saying that China's rejection of Japan's proposal is ill suited to stop the accusations. However that may be, most other countries in the region seem willing to go along with the Japanese initiative. After all, international pressure to tackle the problem is mounting, while it is much more difficult for smaller countries to resist Japan than it is for China.

These countries might well realise, moreover, that without the assistance of a great power, it is rather difficult indeed to eradicate piracy. Regionally, Japan is then in a position to play the role Great Britain performed during most of the nineteenth century, when it pressed for anti-piracy and anti-slavery campaigns[3]. Finally, these smaller countries possibly are motivated by the fear to be accused of involvement in the crime when they refuse to follow Japan. They fear this accusation the more, as a co-ordinated anti-piracy campaign (under Japanese leadership) can also be used to fight the smuggling of drugs in, through and from the region. The shadow of being entangled in the drugs business is already hanging over them, and further suspicions are easily aroused. Indeed, it is only probable that criminal organisations that are involved in piracy also are busy on the drugs traffic scene. The first evil supports the second. Both, moreover, are in need of international ramifications and of contacts with the *upper world* of respectable officials, politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen. Under these circumstances it is rather difficult for small Southeast Asian countries not to show themselves interested in Japan's initiatives. Besides, to go along with these plans perhaps presents them with another advantage. It allows them to distance themselves from criminal accessories in their own backyards who until now, counted on some kind of government protection. Towards these circles, the government in question can point out now that it must withdraw this protection under heavy, external pressure.

The complications, accompanying the Japanese initiative indicate that anti-piracy activities by Western countries will meet with even greater obstacles. Japan may be hampered by its World War II legacy, but countries like Great Britain, France, the Netherlands and the United States have to carry the burden of their colonial pasts. Southeast Asian states will not easily and gracefully react to anti-piracy initia-

tives, coming from this direction. Consequently, Western countries are well advised to go no further than to offer suggestions, money and perhaps the assistance of civilian experts. These restraints make these countries at the same time, however, vulnerable to complaints uttered by shipping companies and sailors' unions. These groups demand an effective anti-piracy policy. As they are sceptical about the ability of regional states to implement it, they turn towards their own governments. While doing this, they bring the following points to their governments' attention. First, old Western naval forces are expected to protect the shipping industry from any danger, including piracy. There is no reason why this tradition nowadays should no longer obtain. Second, while most instances of piracy do not occur on the high seas – so outside the reach of Western naval forces – their presence in the vicinity might still have a beneficial effect. On one hand it will deter pirates and on the other hand warn regional countries not to slacken their anti-piracy efforts. Third, Western countries (together with Japan) might take the initiative to raise an anti-piracy unit under the auspices and flag of the United Nations. Such a unit could be tasked with convoy and patrolling duties in high-risk areas. Placing this unit under United Nations' responsibility might, moreover, go a long way to placate the sensitivities of the regional countries as to Western and Japanese interference in their regional affairs.

For the time being, however, Western countries seem little inclined to accept these arguments. Whether this situation will change in the near future is open to doubt. Western naval forces are, after all, ambivalent. On the one hand, after the end of the Cold War, they are free to go *out of area* and accept new and non-military tasks. On the other hand, they will have to do with lower budgets and are confronted by severe recruiting problems. Under these circumstances, it is hardly acceptable for them to send their ships and personnel to faraway places on dull and monotonous convoy duties. Besides, Western naval forces are on the whole reluctant to accept non-military tasks on a regular basis. They hesitate to see their future (their ships' design, weaponry, training, et cetera) in police-like terms. To them nothing less than their self-image and *raison d'être* as a military organisation are at stake. Only when this kind of non-military task is presented as *peace support* operations might this situation change. For anti-piracy duties the attachment of this *peace support* label, however, is at present not very likely (Scott 1994; Pugh 1994).

After this overview it will be clear that for international anti-piracy measures the future is still rather bleak. Even the Piracy Centre of the IMB seems to suffer from this state of affairs, dependent as it is on financial help from Southeast Asian countries. Some of these are at times rather slow to pay their fees. Perhaps this reluctance is partly caused by fears (and irritation) that the Piracy Centre gives a bad name to the region by drawing (too much) international attention to the piracy problem. Of course, this purblind reaction does not hurt the criminals, but only the messenger of the bad tidings (Chalk 1998a). However this may be, where state authorities fail to take effective action, private industry reacts in a time-honoured way: by taking initiatives of its own. Western countries (at least the non-totalitarian ones) are of old familiar with this reaction and have at times even reckoned with them on a regular basis. Through all ages, weak states have learned to accept the assistance of private firms. Even essential government tasks – as the care for internal and external security – were not exempt from this rule. At sea the activities of chartered companies and

privateers (an end to the activities of the latter started only after the 1856 treaty of Paris) (Stark 1967) attested to this, as well as the fact that, till the beginning of the nineteenth century, merchants often paid for and organised their own convoys in times of war. It is striking, moreover, that at land private security firms start to fill the gaps that police departments are unable to stop in ever more metropolitan cities (and not only in Western countries).

Non-governmental organisations offer their services in a quickly growing number of societal spheres. Besides, even the armed forces learn to delegate logistical and other support tasks to private firms. At sea this development now seems to go even one step further. Since 1993 several shipping companies and Gurkhas (who were hurt by a loss of interest in their services by the British army) have found each other on the anti-piracy market. No less than sixteen shipping companies – operating between them about seventy five ships – use the military reputation of these mercenaries to ensure their ships a safe passage through pirate-infested areas (World Wide Maritime Policy n.d.).[4] In principle the ex-soldiers are unarmed. Their reputation as members of an elite unit must suffice to keep the criminals at a distance. To accomplish this, it is imperative of course that the shipping companies concerned loudly proclaim the presence of the Gurkhas on board their vessels. Without this message the martial reputation of the latter does not show to full advantage, forcing the Gurkhas into action. That, however, is decidedly not the intention. In case the pirates might have missed the message, the Gurkhas are not supposed to use more than *non-lethal weapons.*

This kind of weapons become available in ever more varieties, not least because Western soldiers are of late regularly tasked with restoring order after urban riots and peace keeping missions. The effect of these weapons is rather restricted. However, to use them to full advantage the skills and discipline are needed of which only very well trained soldiers (and police units) dispose. In this respect, it is to be applauded that the shipping companies have hired Gurkhas to handle these weapons and do not trust their regular crews with them. Apart from the fact that accomplices of the pirates may well be hidden among the crew, the effect of *non-lethal weapons* is probably nil when used by amateurs. For this reason too shipping companies do well to discourage the crews on board of their ships not to try (armed) resistance (*NRC Handelsblad* 15-11-2000; Ellen 1989). Almost all of the pirates operating in Southeast Asia are very well armed and do not hesitate to use all of the weapons in their arsenal at the slightest pretext. Resistance that is not of a massive and disciplined kind is only likely to elicit a brutal and effective response. There seems to be of late no lack of small private security firms who offer their services in the anti-piracy branch. No doubt the professional qualities of these firms are well below those of the Gurkhas.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

A first point to stress is that the susceptibility of Southeast Asia to piracy has not notably changed since the nineteenth century. Shipping routes are still very crowded, especially so when the seas narrow themselves into straits. Still, the forms in which

piracy presents itself nowadays are dissimilar from those during the former period. Then, assaults from the sea on coastal villages were among the most frequent and dangerous. At present they are seldom heard of. Yet, they are not completely absent. The recent hostage taking of Western tourists on the island of Basilan (Northeast of Borneo) by Muslim resistance fighters from the Philippines attests to this fact. All the same, this assault differs from the activities of the nineteenth century pirates, coming from approximately the same area (the Sulu archipelago). The hostage taking was perpetrated by terrorists, eager to attract the attention of the media of Western countries, to expose the weakness of the Philippine government and to earn money to buy weapons with. Compared to these motives, the Sulu pirates were simply after economic gain. Their goal was to capture people who could be sold on the slave market. Yet, this financial motive should not distract from the fact that, for the inhabitants of the Sulu sultanate, piracy was also a means to oppose the central-istic tendencies of the (Spanish) government in Manila. That this opposition was directed against non-Muslims gave an extra edge to their exploits (Warren 1981).

This latter element, however, was not of fundamental importance. Centralising states in general do not take kindly to migrating groups that are able to withdraw from their bureaucratic and administrative attention. These states almost always try to tighten their grip on such groups, whether these latter consist of co-religionists or not. Another difference between the present and the nineteenth century seems to be that nowadays the pirates do not seem to form durable social communities, with a dedicated culture and economy. In the nineteenth century the sultanates of Sulu and sizable groups of islands in the Riau-Lingga sultanate, confirmed to this pattern (Tarling 1971). At present, the pirates seem to be much more loosely structured, operating from a multitude of only loosely connected groups. Still, some of these entities are not without a measure of permanence. After all, between pirates and cor-rupt officials, relationships may grow that are so profitable to both sides, that they may obtain some durability. On the other hand, these officials are geographically not so deeply rooted – and consequently much more vulnerable – than the pirates' nineteenth century political protectors. This difference means that this durability is still rather restricted. This is even more the case when the government in question takes care to implement two measures: first, to let its officials rotate geographically and second, to keep them out of resorts in which they might find people with the same ethnic background.

An important, but not very striking feature (of all times) is that pirates are dependent on receivers, moneylenders, supporters among the local population, and people on key posts in the *upper world*. In this sense, pirates are not more than the tip of an iceberg, just as guerrilla fighters are. These fighters too cannot operate without the (often massive) support of local sympathisers. In the case of piracy it is important to note that – in addition – this support has to be spread out (in order to be effective) over quite an extended area. At present, this area might cover the sea territories of several states, while ethnicity often forms the glue with which to cement the contacts over this range together. The nineteenth century too witnessed this phenomenon. Especially the pirates operating from the Sulu zone took care to assure themselves of the help of several colonies along their routes of operation. For the fight against piracy important consequences follow from these international

ramifications. As in counter-insurgency campaigns, piracy fighters can aim at three targets. They can single out the pirates themselves. They can try to isolate the pirates from their sympathisers, and they can direct their efforts at this latter category. Experience has taught that the first alternative rarely brings lasting results when it is tackled in isolation.

Another similarity between the present and the nineteenth century, is the trouble it takes for the suffering parties to pool their efforts against the pirates. During the latter period, this trouble originated from the uncertainties surrounding the delineation of spheres of influence. Riau-Lingga was claimed by the Netherlands and Great Britain as well, Sulu by the Netherlands and Spain. These uncertainties do not explain why so many pirates came from these areas. They do explain, however, why the colonial powers took so long to eradicate there the evil. They simply choose not to force the issue for fear of provoking conflicts among themselves. The same mechanism now seems to be at work again. Territorial disputes abound in Southeast Asia, making the countries here reluctant to ask each other for assistance against the pirates – fearing their neighbours might interpret these calls for help as a confirmation of their claim. Again, this situation presents the pirates with sanctuaries in which they are safe from pursuers. These sanctuaries are the geographical equivalents of the protected enclaves that corrupt officials can create around the pirates. An interesting feature of the present situation is that a relative outsider like Japan is perhaps needed to break this deadlock. All the same, if Japan's efforts stop at offering the assistance of its coast guard, nothing much will be accomplished. Japan can do Southeast Asia a much greater favour if it succeeds in bringing the regional countries together in a co-operative plan that encompasses diplomatic, operational and judicial matters.

In the nineteenth century, the naval organisations of the colonial powers were fully engaged against the pirates. In contrast, Western naval forces nowadays, while aware of the magnitude of the problem, hesitate to commit themselves. In doing so, they point to the following considerations: first, the primary responsibility for the suppression of piracy of the regional powers; second, that they can only lend an operational hand after one or more of these countries have called them in for help; third, that they want to avoid accusations of neo-colonialism when indulging in unilateral actions; fourth, that anti-piracy campaigns mean withdrawing military assets from their primary security mission. This last restriction, of course, also made itself felt in the nineteenth century. In that period, however, the Pax Britannica was rooted deeply enough to keep the colonial powers from actually fighting each other. This meant that colonial officials, both civil and military, were in effect free from this worry, allowing them to assign their navies to anti-piracy tasks. Under present circumstances, Western naval forces are placed in a much more complicated situation. This restriction also applies to the naval forces of the Southeast Asian countries themselves. Indonesia, for instance, will have to guard against the accusation that, under the cloak of an anti-piracy campaign, it uses its naval forces to suppress separatist movements on the outer islands. In the nineteenth century, colonial forces were always sure of widespread public approval when fighting piracy. Nowadays, the situation is distinctly more troublesome to their successors. Coupled to the reluctance of Western naval forces to interfere, and the restraint shown by Japan, forceful

anti-piracy campaigns are not to be expected in the near future.

This conclusion explains the security initiatives taken by private companies, resulting in their hiring of Gurkhas. At first sight, these initiatives were absent in the nineteenth century. Governments were, after all, rather active then against the pirates, while only a few Western ships fell victim to this evil. On the other hand, in the nineteenth century too government policy was for a long time rather unsuccessful. Besides, many European traders made use of native vessels. So, whenever pirates took one of these, Western interests were hurt as well. Seen in this light, there is room after all to expect some private initiatives during the nineteenth century. The activities of a James Brooke on Northern Borneo confirm this supposition. For Brooke the creation of commercial opportunities were from the outset accompanied by anti-piracy measures (Tarling 1971). He had, moreover, many imitators, though it proved extremely difficult to emulate his successes. To a considerable degree, the Dutch government in the East Indies was responsible for this course of events. After having lost part of its (ill-defined) sphere of influence to the Englishman Brooke, it was determined to stop any further erosion of its territories in border regions. It was not prepared to exchange one group of freebooters (the pirates) for another one (British private traders). It considered the latter as being even more dangerous than the former, seeing to the anti-Dutch support they might evoke in Singapore.

Dutch colonial authorities took no chances with Brooke-like initiatives by Dutchmen either. They were, however, very much interested in a suggestion made around 1840 by one Jan Nicolaas Vosmaer. This Dutch trader hoped to counter piracy by convincing the perpetrators to change from piracy to agriculture, and to settle down to this end on tracts of land he purchased from the government. The colonial authorities appreciated these efforts and were certainly willing to help Vosmaer. The initiative, however, was implemented on a too restricted scale to be really successful. It came, moreover, too early. At that time the Dutch government in the East Indies was still rather negatively inclined towards opening up the islands outside of Java to private capital and business initiatives (Vosmaer 1839; de Waal 1879). [5] Lastly, mention must be made of the booty money colonial governments in Southeast Asia were willing to pay to private ships' crews that managed to capture or kill pirates. This regulation attests to the fact that these governments acknowledged to be unable on their own to guarantee the safety of these crews at sea. Their reaction was to delegate a government responsibility to private action, taken directly by the threatened part of the colonial community itself. This reaction reflects on two considerations: first, the seriousness of the piracy problem and second, that governments more easily accepted the use of force for the protection of private interests at sea than they were prepared to do on land. Evidently they felt less threatened by the former activity than by the latter.

Further Questions

The purpose of comparisons is not simply to tally similarities and differences between the phenomena under scrutiny. It is to get these phenomena more sharply into focus, in this way enabling researchers and policy makers to ask new, relevant

questions. In the present case, these questions may be directed at: the parallels between state formation and decline, and the role piracy plays in these processes; the connection between piracy and other forms of organised crime (drugs trafficking, hostage taking, extortion, smuggling of refugees, et cetera) and the extent to which resistance movements are involved in these activities. Of course, this list is not meant to be exhaustive.

Notes

[1] Internet data have also been used.

[2] Internet data have also been used.

[3] See for this role of Great Britain, Steel 1996.

[4] Internet data have also been used.

[5] Further mention of Vosmaer's plans in Kniphorst (n.d.), chapter 3 'Middelen, ook Aanverwante, ter Bestrijding'.

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The Ethnography of Local Tourism
Connections between Fishery and Tourism in Izola[1]

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ABSTRACT The paper is about the fishermen community in Izola, a coastal town in the North-east of the Upper Adriatic. Attention is given to the wider socio-natural context within which fishermen from Izola find themselves situated after the break-up of Yugoslavia. The principal change that fishermen find most influential to their situation is the new state border that caused losses of previous fishing territory along what is now Croatian coast. Special attention is given to one of the several adaptive strategies devised by the fishermen from Izola, which was increasingly demonstrated after 1991: combining fishery with tourism. Two points are central to the research: what is the fishermen's attitude towards tourism activities in comparison with fishery and what is it that people from the tourist industry are marketing for the tourists that involves fishery? The last of the two questions partly brings to the fore the tourism discourse of the newly established Slovene state about its coastal area, and the analysis of the fishermen's perspective on the new situation and their adaptation to tourism.

Introduction

I remember how several years ago I watched some slides, with my friends back home, from my summer vacations on the Adriatic coast. The photographs that captured my friends' and above all the photographer's – my – attention, were undoubtedly those that portrayed colourful wooden boats in the port, silhouettes of the fishing vessels with the setting sun in the background, tanned and weather-beaten fisher-men faces, and bits of coastal villages that I had managed to cut out the neon adver-tisement signs from. At the time that I joined a research project at the Institute for Humanistic Studies ISH and started on my fieldwork in the Upper Adriatic region, I also started to look through the tourist brochures and postcards of this region. I found out that many of the photographs in the tourist brochures and postcards were very much the same as mine. Several questions incited my curiosity. For instance, where did the interest for certain images stem from, and which mechanisms were involved to produce the aesthetic and emotional response in the viewer? What, if any, are the consequences of these ritualised images in everyday life, in the concrete dimension of space and time? These questions were pertinent to me throughout my research on fishery and tourism in Izola.

Interestingly enough, in the final stage writing this article, I came across an advertisement published in the nautical review *Val* (Wave), which triggered off another association. The photograph in the advertisement was taken in the port of Piran. It showed a young woman in a white mini skirt sitting on a fishing net full of fish, sunbathing and reading the very same review she was advertising. Behind her, there was an elderly man cleaning the net, peering at the same time over the woman's

shoulder. On the one hand, then, he is interested in the review, and on the other, one could say he is making a pass at the woman. Two main stereotypes in the advertisement are represented: that of a fisherman, and that of a tourist. A possible interpretation is that the fisherman corresponds with the old, archaic, passive principle, whereas the tourist corresponds with the modern, perhaps, aggressive principle (she assumes the right to sit on his net while the fisherman is cleaning it). The fisherman is here to stay, whereas the tourist comes and goes. The fisherman works, the tourist relaxes. The tourist is flirting with the landscape surrounding her, while the fisherman is part of this landscape. The fisherman is flirting with the young woman, and at the same time, he is flirting with the nautical world: the tourist forms a part of his scope of flirting. Although the two figures could be seen as very different in many ways (for example, female-male, archaic-modern) they appear to interact harmoniously with each other. The advertisement, though, stresses both harmony and tension between the two stereotypes; it demonstrates the coming together of two (different) worlds, which are on the one hand affectionate to each other, but on the other, incompatible. It can be observed that the advertiser intends in the review to state that they are capable of overcoming this incompatibility. The review is only the channel, or the medium; but at the level of its content, one could talk about the broader field attached to imagery and the sea.

Fig. 1. *From nautical review:* Val *(Wave), June 2001. Ljubljana.*

I will discuss the connection between fishery and tourism in Izola on two levels. The first level reveals *fishermen as tourist workers* and is based primarily on my ethnographic evidence. It brings in the fishermen's perspective: their view of tourism and tourists.[2] The other level highlights *fishery as a part of the tourist landscape.* I will present an analysis of the selected tourist brochures and postcards printed over

the last ten years and comment upon the image of fishery they present. In the ensuing discussion, I will attempt to place these two views in dialogue with each other.[3]

The idea of bringing together an analysis of the fishermen's perspective with an analysis of tourist brochures and postcards is based on the presupposition that *the ethnography of local tourism and of localities bidding for tourist attention shows the role of larger processes that define economic and cultural realities* (Pálsson and Durrenberger 1996:7). The dialogue between the two levels seems reasonable because it broadens the scope from the local to the national and trans-national scale. These latter two scales also contribute towards a proper outline of the concrete dimensions of people in action. My second presupposition is that *through tourist brochures the local and broader scales can be observed.* In my opinion tourist representations are, on the one hand, contextualised with actual tourist imagery and on the other, they allude to national discourses. In this paper, I will pay attention to local details and their attachment to the broader context, where the scales of discourse will be local and national. In doing so, I will draw upon the writings of Ulf Hannerz, emphasising the redefinition of the anthropological project in the sense of the following:

> One necessary ingredient in making anthropology contribute realistically to an understanding of the contemporary world ... might be not to look just in front of us, first, at whatever we take to be an other culture, and then over the shoulder, at the audience at home, but also sideways, at the various other people also situated at the interfaces between cultures and engaged in making the global ecumene. There are journalists and film-makers there, tourists and tour guides, social workers, jurists, business consultants... (Hannerz 1993:48 in Pálsson and Durrenberger 1996:6).

I also draw upon the theoretical starting points of various contributions in *Images of Contemporary Iceland: Everyday Lives and Global Contexts* (Pálsson and Durrenberger 1996). The authors talk about local communities as communities situated in the space-time continuum. In doing so, they stress the chaotic flow of images and identities in their broader contexts and the plurality of voices in the process of imagining. Some authors (among whom D. MacCannell, R. Hewison, D. Greenwood) regard connections between local and broader contexts as an alienating reconstruction of the local as a process in which, as MacCannell suggests, the local is subsumed to the global (MacCannell 1992 in MacDonald 1997:157). Although, for example tourist heritage representations certainly involve some of the processes of 'inauthentication' of culture, I am inclined to agree with this point with Sharon MacDonald. She talks of the representations of Aros, a tourist centre in Scotland, as those that involve a good deal of translating the local into categories with more global semantic scope. At the same time she stresses that the creators of tourist representations are very concerned with presenting a sense of local distinctiveness (MacDonald 1997:156, 157).

Fishermen as Tourist Workers

I will try to describe the phenomena with answers related to the connection between fishery and tourism in this section. These answers draw heavily upon my ethno-

graphic material and relate to the following questions: which are the concrete forms of this connection? How is it represented by the fishermen's perspective? And how is the connection possible in the first place? The latter question foregrounds the opinions of fishermen-tourist workers upon tourists' expectations and wishes.

CONNECTION BETWEEN TOURISM AND FISHERY IN NUMBERS

In the coastal area between Piran and Ankaran, according to the data of *Ob inski sekretariat za finance in gospodarstvo – obina Koper* (Municipality of Koper – public sector for finance and economy) dated 23rd of April 1997, there were 74 fishermen involved in fisheries as their primary occupation and 107 fishermen involved in fishery as an additional occupation. Although my ethnographic evidence is limited to the coastal area that is nowadays part of the state of Slovenia, my decision for doing so is not based on the presupposition that people involved in fishing and tourism in the selected area share a different cultural repertoire from the people involved in the same work outside the state border. Rather, it is based on the fact that one of the changes that fishermen in Slovenia find most influential to their situation is the establishment of the new state. The new state border caused losses of previous fishing territory along what is nowadays the Croatian coast; closed fishing territory and the prohibition of fishing with drag-nets during the late spring and summer period meant a dead season for fishermen involved in this kind of fishing technology. Additionally, in the period of the dead season, the state of Slovenia does not now support fishermen in paying their health insurance and from 1991 laws considering fisheries are in the competence of the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry in Ljubljana.

Fig. 2. *Map of the area (IAS 2000. Ljubljana:CZ).*

Fishermen who (mostly in the summer period) combine fishing and tourism are also engaged in the facility of passenger transportation. In the area between Ankaran and Piran there are 16 such boats that combine fishery and tourism, while in Izola, there are 8 such boats.[4] In this combined business, the individual fishermen are involved as well as the company *Riba d.o.o.* [Fish ltd.].

About Different Ways of Fishing… Tourists or Visitors?
The analysis of my ethnographic evidence highlights three predominant forms of tourist fishing boat excursions and I will use them for the purpose of this article as descriptors. They are: panoramic tours; picnics and other forms of excursions with a type of restaurant service; recreational fishing for visitors and the presentation of fishing. In this last case, we could talk of two 'sub-forms'; in the first, the work on fishing boats is adapted to the visitors (it takes less time, for example). In the second, visitors do not disturb the ordinary working routine on the boat but are just additional crewmembers. I will call the latter *participation*. Officially, participation is practiced just in the company Fish ltd.*,* whereas other fishermen sometimes take occasional visitors on the boat to fish with them or just observe them working but, as they say, they do not practice that to earn, but to please the visitors. The adapted presentation of fishing involves predominantly school groups, while in the case of the participative fishing there are smaller groups of people (3-5 persons) that stay on board with fishermen the entire day. Fishing with a drag net seems the most appropriate or the only appropriate way to enable such an experience for the visitors. Fishing with nets, for example, is unsuitable because there is a 12-hour period between the placing and lifting of the nets. The catch of mullet*,* which is generally one of the big events in the area, is also unsuitable because the timing for catching them is unpredictable – it can often happen during the night. The most frequent excursions that are practiced among fishermen from Izola between May and September are panoramic excursions and fish picnics (as they call these excursions where seafood is offered). The average number of working days in the season is between 70 and 100 days.[5]

The visitors that sign up for such excursions are mostly people living in Slovenia, which gives special character to this business. When fishermen talk about their visitors they stress that they are not involved in business with tourists but that they deal mostly with *organized groups*. In saying that, the word *tourist* is attached to the stranger (not living close nor speaking the Slovene or Italian language[6]) and the words *organized groups* is linked to the scholar groups, working collectives or other professional groups from various seminars and congresses, all coming from Slovenia. The other words (rather than organized groups) that fishermen use in describing their guests are: 'visitors', 'home guests', and 'the world of business'. As one of them said:

> …Mostly we work… this with the tourism we do not work at all, hardly ever… because we work just little with the agencies, and we have very few strangers. Mostly we have Slovenes, various companies, clubs and groups from all parts of Slovenia (M2, Izola, February 2001).

Different forms of excursions offered on fishing boats are, as the fishermen emphasised, also very different in terms of their content. If the panoramic excursions, fish picnics and recreational fishing are connected with amusement and relaxation, demonstrational fishing can be seen as an educational experience and the participative fishing as a kind of 'special' event that encompasses emotional and physical engagement. The differences in terms of content can be partly linked up with different forms of tourist gaze (Urry 1990): the collective tourist gaze, the educational tourist gaze, the romantic tourist gaze… Urry's typology of tourist gazes reflects the different nature of tourist experiences, expectations and wishes, but as a model cannot always be applied to ethnographic data. To a degree it can be argued that in the case of panoramic excursions, the focus of interest is not so much on 'authenticity' but on amusement and relaxation. However, in the case of participative fishing, the connection is more obvious: it is precisely to do with immersing oneself in the supposed authenticity, trying to become, as one of fisherman stated, 'a fisherman for one day'. In the latter, the working routine is the object of the tourist gaze, moreover the form and the content of a certain image becomes the subject one should live through as much as possible. In a certain sense one could talk about 'exoticising' the practice of fishing.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CONNECTION: BETWEEN STATE BORDERS AND BEACHES
The establishment of the state border that caused losses of previous fishing territory along what is nowadays Croatian coast is the most frequent explanation for combining fishery with tourism. Some of the fishermen stressed that they were practicing similar excursions even before the founding of the state of Slovenia but these were, as one of them said, 'unorganised, not serious and forced actions'.[7]

> …As I said… 15 years ago we began… I could say… we were forced to do this because of the inquiry of guests and so on… and we were doing this by the way, during the summer… we did it on Friday, Saturday, Sunday. When we saw that there was a lot of interest, we began to take it a little bit more seriously and then the prices were also set, you understand…(M3, Izola, February 2001).

Along with arguments about the establishing of the new state border that caused the combined activity, other explanations were also cited. These included: *the demand and interest on behalf of clients; a new service on the market; lack of territory for the existing number of fishermen along the presently Slovenian coast, an; the overfished Slovenian sea.* These explanations are backed up with the following statements: 'everybody thinks fishing is a harmful technology'; 'it is said that our sea is very small and so we have to protect it'; 'fishing must be reduced'… Such explanations are heard on TV, in newspapers, in the statements of public persons…[8] With the alloy of such statements, the fishermen's explanations highlight the positive aspects of combining fishery with tourism, and often it is stressed that state agencies should support such activities.

Fishermen also emphasise the interest of their customers as an important factor in establishing such an activity. Above all, this is mentioned in cases when fishermen speak about the demonstrational fishing or the participative fishing.

Consequently, the attractiveness of their product is mentioned in a way that it brings something new to the existing market for connecting the fishing world with the tourist market and gives them an opportunity to stay in touch with the sea.

> ... I started with the fishing *osmica* [eight]... what would it mean...why should osmica be only related to meat. And because our starting point is fish why not fishing osmica... we made quite a big attraction out of it, because it was something new. We connected this fishing world with the tourist offer. And this was an idea how we could change the fishing world into a tourist offer, since there was not much sea left... (M2, Izola, April 2001).[9]

> ...I started this in 1993, after the break-up of Yugoslavia, I made my living just from fishing... All my family and I. And you have to maintain such a big boat and you have to maintain three families. And obviously ... what can we do ... to reorganize ourselves and to change our work into something completely different, or try to live with the sea again and then we tried with tourism and for 4 to 5 months we've been fishing. So the whole year is covered, a little of fishing and a little of tourism. If it is not so you cannot live properly. Tourist workers... yes you could say, but still we are with sea and so on... With the same boat we catch fish and tourists. This is it… (M4, Izola, May 2001).

Although it seems that the only or primary reason for fishermen involved in the tourist business was the new political situation after 1991, there are other meaningful reasons that fishermen identified as well. Explanations of fishermen's involvement in tourism can be related to ecological, political and tourist discourses. For the purposes of this paper, I will divide them into three categories; those talking about the fishermen's own interests; those talking about the visitor's interests and those based on ecological reasons. In the first case, primary concern is given to higher incomes, diversified work in the summer and winter periods, livelier work in general and finally also the fact that you can remain connected to the sea. The visitors' interests involve, above all, relaxation, entertainment, healthy food and air, the possibility of fishing with fishermen, education, sea and authentic experiences. Finally in the field of ecological reasons, the advantages of such a connection link up primarily with statements of an overly small, polluted and over-fished sea, of the numbers of fishermen being too large, et cetera… Although things are interconnected, I can speculate that the visitors' interests are closely related to the tourist discourse and the economic and ecological reasons are closely related to the political and environmental-protective discourse.

Visitors and Their Wishes
One of the explanations as to why this connection comes about in the first place is also the aforementioned interest of visitors. In relation to this explanation, the following question arises: which are those expectations and questions produced by the social environment and further 'put in front' of the fishermen? To what extent the fishermen relate to them, and if so, how are they trying to satisfy them? Although this article does not take into consideration the visitors' perspective, the opinions of fishermen will be discussed in the following section. In connection with panoramic

excursions, the most highlighted aspect – meant to be crucial in attracting visitors – was amusement and relaxation. In the opinion of some of my interviewees, the 'amusement on the boat' in comparison with the 'amusement on the land' was different and much better. The visitors' reactions described by fishermen are as follows: 'they became very talkative'; 'they lighten up'; 'they relax'; 'they sing'; 'they take off the tie'; 'sometimes there is a bit of adrenaline because of a wave and afterwards even greater enjoyment, they enjoy the sea and nature'... Apart from the ambience, the other attractive aspects emphasized also included: the fact that they are with 'real' fishermen; that a lot of the fishing equipment stays on the boat also during the summer and is shown to people; and also the fact that very fresh fish (considered as a healthy food) is on offer. Often, fishermen stress that they are trying to get the fish that swam in the sea only several hours ago. It is assumed that visitors could not get hold of such fresh fish as the fishermen can provide them with. The positive side to recreational sport fishing is primarily that many people can fish together and compete with each other, proving themselves as fishermen. On the other hand, fishermen can show the visitors the fishing territories.

> ...These visitors come for their own pleasure, because they want to fish. That is why I took them to the fishing spots, where there is fish and that is where they fish then. And fishing... as we know... you can catch something or you might not... In the meantime they get hungry, thirsty and become a bit moody. Some were successful and the others were not… If they are successful in fishing they are pleased; if they are not they get angry. So you must be able to adapt to the situation and satisfy visitors. If they did not catch anything you offer them some fish snack for comfort... (M2, Izola, April 2001).

Participative fishing is stressed as something very distinctive among all others forms of tourist product. Often, this product is not meant to be profitable as a job, but as an activity, which in the first place came from the visitors' interests. It aims to please visitors, and after all, as one of the fishermen said: visitors are 'living with fishermen for a day, which is something special; they become one of them for a day'.

Fishermen also emphasised that visitors are interested in the state border between Slovenia and Croatia. As one of them explained:

> ...Some attractions are shown, let's say, if there are special wishes we take them there... Usually they want to see our state border on the sea... interestingly we do not know exactly where it is... some of them imagine that there is a wire on the sea. And then... you say we are out, we are in (Slovenia)... (M5, Izola, March 2001).

An evaluation of the tourist business dimension also brings the following question to the fore: what can fishermen offer in comparison with the ordinary tourist boats? The question is in close connection with the visitors' interest. If each of the above mentioned visitors' interests is related to the fishermen's explanation, the following connections can be made: the successful entertainment and relaxation are closely related to the atmosphere (the sea, the fish and the fishing boat are supposed to provide a healthy, relaxed and domestic atmosphere), safety (that is provided by

the knowledge of the sea fishermen are supposed to possess); for recreational and demonstrational fishing, the fishermen's knowledge is crucial; and for participative fishing, the fishermen themselves and their working routine become the object of the tourist gaze.

FISHERY AS A PART OF THE TOURIST LANDSCAPE

A specific form of the relationship between fishery and tourism can be noticed in the tourist discourse. In selected tourist brochures and postcards we can also find motives presenting fishery and fishing-related activities, objects and people, among other things.[10] They can be seen together with images of sailing boats, surf, tanned bodies, architecturally interesting towns: I only mention the most frequent ones; they form part of the tourist landscape, fitting into the specific range of social admirations, claims and expectations.[11]
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Tourist images are understood through various topics; each of these contributing to the effect of a specific image. Shedding light on certain representations and their contexts can, in part, answer the question of why specific motives are popular and to what their messages are bound. Tourist representations reveal a net of social relations, attitudes towards nature, wishes, expectations, and the formation of new identities. We can look upon concrete tourist representations as the reifications of the popular current issues. John Urry's objects of the tourist gaze are, for example, placed in a complex and changing hierarchy. As he argues:

> An array of tourist professionals develop who attempt to reproduce ever-new objects
> of the tourist gaze. These objects are located in a complex and changing hierarchy.
> This depends upon the interplay between, on the one hand, competition between

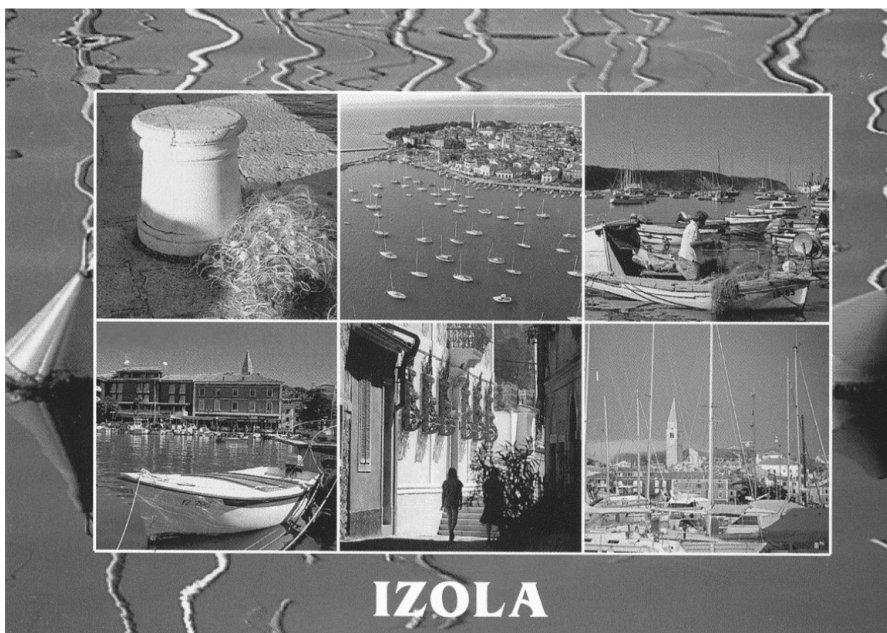Fig. 3. *Postcard:* Piran *(Photo: S. Simi)*

Fig. 4. *Postcard:* Izola *(Photo: Jugovi & Neve ny).*

interests involved in the provision of such objects and, on the other hand, changing class, gender and generational distinctions of taste within the potential population of visitors (Urry 1990:3-4).

As such, it is important to understand tourist representations beyond the categories of real-unreal, to refer to them through the prism of their current interpretation. They reveal the value of the tourist experience, which is formed through the constant redefining of good and bad, suitable and unsuitable. We can imagine the production of tourist representations as building connections with certain places, images, and landscape... These connections are not simply limited to the visual level, in the sense of the visualisation of a certain segment but, as Orvar Löfgren says, they involve emotions as well. He believes that modern tourism should be looked at as upon the field where individuals explore, cultivate and form emotional experiences during the last 200 years (Löfgren 1999:16).

I would suggest that tourist brochures and postcards are useful materials through which we can learn about local identity and displacement of culture for tourism. In the following lines I will comment upon photographs depicting fishery themes, as well as texts referring to fishery (both those accompanying the photographs and those found in various guides).

The Construction of the Image of Fishermen between Mediterranean, the Good Old Times and the Unpredictable Sea

Representations of fishery in the selected tourist brochures and postcards take up approximately 10 per cent of all the (visual and textual) information presented. Even

though the text presented is not examining in detail the motives and perspectives of producers of the tourist material, there are a few facts that should be highlighted before moving further. When dealing with tourist brochures and other materials aimed at tourists, one must bear in mind that much can depend on *who* produces the information. The producers of the tourist brochures and postcards that I refer to in the following analysis are independent authors (photographers, text writers and designers), government tourist departments or private publishing houses and institutes. The selected material is not directly related to the commercial advertising propaganda (this being so in the case of travel organizations' and hotel's advertisements) but must be seen either as a wish to present truly 'informative information' or as an independent author's work. The other interesting thing that should be stressed is the fact that almost all producers involved are working and living in Slovenia, and many of them are locals in the region that is being examined. The situation presented here is thus the following: native producers refer their publications for local consumption. The frame of reference is thus home-centred and can be linked with local and national discourses for the most part.

If I generalize, visualization of fishery focuses on three main fields: the representation of boats that are needed for fishing; the representation of fishing equipment and finally the representation of people (mostly male) who are involved in fishing or activities connected with fishing (for example, cleaning nets). In the set of selected material, we find 13 photographs that show fishing boats; of which 10 show older wooden boats equipped for fishing with ordinary nets and only three show boats equipped with dragnets. Among the fishing equipment shown, there are mostly nets, but in addition we see also ropes and barrels for salted sardines. The nets are either shown as the main motifs and are set in the foreground, as a decoration, or set in the context of their use (cleaning or fishing). The third type of visual representations of fishery shows male persons who are involved in different ways in the fishing economy. Most of them show the males in the centre of the photograph, their work is placed at the centre of interest and interestingly, more than half of these photographs show elderly males. Smaller wooden boats, fishing nets and elderly persons leave an impression of the times gone by, an impression which, in my opinion, also carries a nostalgic flavour (sepia coloured photographs, the silhouette of a fishing boat at sunset…). The

Fig. 5. *From tourist brochure:* Izola – Mediteran na vašem pragu *[Izola – Mediterranean on your doorstep] 1998. Izola: Turisti no informativni center Izola.*

common denominator of these images can be understood through the concept of good old times, which in its turn contains ideas of rurality, honesty, originality… The same can be said for most textual parts of tourist brochures referring to fishery. It is described as a part of the economic history of coastal towns – on one hand, it is seen as a part of an unbroken coastal tradition, virtually a museum piece that has been preserved and is still being used today, and on the other hand – the importance of fishery for the establishing of the coastal towns is accentuated. Fishery is portrayed as a primal peculiarity of day-
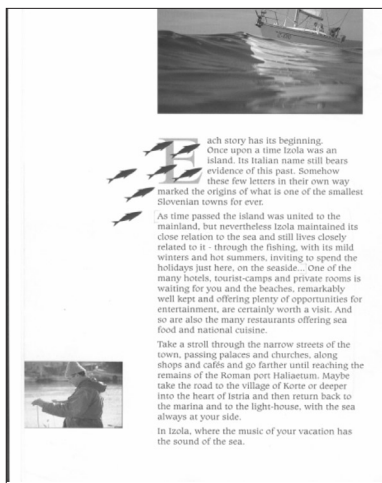
Fig. 6. *From tourist brochure:* Izola-Isola *1999. Izola: Turisti no gospodarsko združenje.*

to-day history that runs alongside the 'mainstream' political and cultural history and while the political history changes rapidly; fishery has a more constant role. In some parts, fishery is presented as being a naturally ingrown part of the area and this being the case, it is used in the introductory part of the tourist materials. Alongside personal characteristics (kind, pleasant, charming town), national (Slovene town) and geographic adjectives (coastal town), the adjective 'fishing' is also used, representing one of the most outstanding characteristics of Izola. For example: 'Izola, Slovene coastal tourist town with a smile and a fishing tradition' (Simi 1997:31). These seem to be of special interest because in the introductory sections, the author wishes to present, in just a few words, the main characteristics of specific towns in the most attractive way. The strong positive connotation of the adjective 'fishing' can be noticed in such cases. On the basis of interviews with the producers of tourist brochures, I would argue that the adjective 'fishing (town)' hints at the following information: Izola has not turned its back on the good old times; Izola is still an honest and pleasant town… A special effect is added by the use of the diminutive form of the word town (*mestece* – small town). The connection between small and honest (meaning small is honest) is often used in tourist mottos that promote Slovenia as a small and honest country. Moreover, fishery and fishermen are mentioned in connection with the characteristic cuisine of Izola that offers supposedly healthy seafood, as well as in connection with fishing holidays. One could say that the 'Dionysian' description of the festival (festival of fishermen, wine, dance, music and good times) incorporates the hidden intention directed towards freedom, relaxation, but also uninhibited and reckless behaviour.

The texts accompanying the photos serve to highlight further the other contexts as well. Two of them in particular, in my opinion, deserve special attention: *the sea* and *the Mediterranean*. Descriptions of the sea are highly romanticised and the connection between the inhabitants of the coastal towns and the sea presented in tourist brochures carries a transcendental note. One of the tourist brochures, ubiquitous in the year 2000, stressed the close relation between the inhabitants of Izola and the sea, a relationship in which the tourist is also invited to experience. The text also emphasises the importance of fishery in keeping this connection alive.

> …Each story has its beginning. Once upon a time Izola was an island… As time passed the island was united to the mainland, but nevertheless Izola maintained its close relation to the sea - through fishing, with its mild winters and hot summers, inviting to spend the holidays just here, on the seaside…In Izola, where the music of your vacation has the sound of the sea (Izola-Isola 1999).

A recommendation for seaside tourists generally follows this idea, advising them to appreciate the connection with the sea and its 'healing and spiritual powers'. Much more than just a sea where we could swim and have fun in, we are introduced to the sea that is the object of admiration, through which we come into contact with nature, wilderness, with eternity. The poem by Jorge Luis Borges included in one of the tourist brochures emphasises the fact that the sea is also an inspiring object; the experience of the sea, as presented here, is (in the first place) spiritual. The poem begins with the following words: 'Long before the time condensed to days, the eternal sea already washed the shores…'

If the context of the sea can be described in words of romanticised wilderness and healing effects, we need to understand the context of the Mediterranean also within a wider political and cultural framework. The titles of the brochures such as *Mediterranean in Slovenia* and *Izola – Mediterranean on your doorstep* tend to display the 'Mediterranean-ness' of the region. Not only in the titles, though. The adjective Mediterranean is used over and over again in the text: Mediterranean food, the Mediterranean climate… It is possible to understand the emphasis on the 'Mediterranean-ness' of the region in several ways; as a flirtation with the imaginary concept(s) of the Mediterranean; as the Mediterranean as an important cultural-historical area; as a place where the so-called western civilization originates and as the Mediterranean representing a previously established tourist region. At the same time, the specific peculiarities of the Slovene Mediterranean are stressed, mostly talking about the proximity of the high mountains. The emphasis on the Mediterranean can be understood through the process of increasing popularity of the Mediterranean as a tourist region, which could be, as Löfgren stresses, observed in several phases. The starting point, as he puts it, could be traced in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the first Mediterranean tourists were members of the English upper class; their wish to learn about the classic culture led them through the towns of Italy and France. Löfgren connects a second phase with the new means of transport that extended the frontiers of the tourist Mediterranean. Education was no longer the focus of the travel; the institutionalisation of leisure time occurred, the important components of travel became relaxation and fun, and the summer holidays come into being. Löfgren suggests that a third phase is characterized by stepping away from the four S's (sun, sand, sex, sea). The tourist experience is in the third phase marked by the great R that unites romantic, special experience, and the re-establishing of the connection between man and nature (Löfgren 1991:157-168).

I would argue that the tourist material examined in this study reflects elements from these various phases, but that on the whole, the representations of fishery correspond mostly to the last phase.

FISHERY: BETWEEN ETHNOGRAPHY AND TOURIST IMAGERY

Confronting tourist brochures and postcards from the area in question with ethnography originates from the presupposition that the fields in question are connected, that they inform each other and that the understanding of local actions demands a closer look at the broader discourses as well. What I suggest in this arti-

cle is that tourist representations are highly contextualised – firstly, within the wish to present local distinctiveness and secondly, within the popular tourist imagery – while at the same time, they show a tendency for the 'correct' national presentation. The images from within the tourist landscape are actually concrete forms, covering the needs of *invented traditions of imagined communities* as well as adapting to other current trends. Tourist representations are neither unchangeable nor are they unidirectional. Although they radiate the illusion of stability and closeness, they are in fact, as far as their external appearance is concerned, very adaptable and readily dynamic. Tourist representations are formed from the beginning through the processes of gazing, on the one hand, and showing on the other. This formation is a vivid process in which the imagery and the concrete action are not only intertwined, but they also mutually form, shape and react. In the same way that tourist representations require appreciation of their context, the identity of an individual or group also does not rely only on the observed activities within the locale. Instead, it is formed on the crossroads of influences that stem from beyond its immediate surroundings. George E. Marcus stresses that: '…It is the various elements of this process of dispersed identity construction – mobile, related representations in many different places of many different characters – that must be grasped as social fact' (Marcus 1996:46).

When speaking about the ethnography of local tourism on the basis of the connection between fishery and tourism, one must bear in mind the various correlative representations of fishery that bring one to the understanding of local specifics. These representations are *de facto* living in the same *habitus* as actors involved in the research. Tourist representations are only one of many fields of reference. This is not to say that one should see people as the passive recipients of external influences. On the basis of my ethnography and analysis of tourist representations, I suggest that people are not only aware of the external images based on themselves, but are also trying to co-operate actively with them and make them a part of their daily activities.

Thus, the connections between fishery and tourism can be, as viewed from the perspective of the people who make a living from combining these two activities, on the level of content, divided into three groups; educational excursions for primary and secondary schools; panoramic excursions for pleasure; and participation in fishing as a special experience. It is between these last two that a stark contrast is evident. The first has an air of easy, unburdened fun and even recklessness about it, while the other is connected to a more 'profound' experience. The profundity of this experience is characterised mostly by the notion of bonding with the sea and the fishery. The sea, as understood here, takes on the role of representing the concept of wilderness, a notion that one should not treat as a defined physical area, but a state of mind. Fishery adds to this experience a link to the primal and the rural, since it represents an activity that every day inevitably includes a confrontation between man and nature. Anthropologists working in the area of maritime anthropology often stress that 'being with nature' is also one of the positive attributes of being a small-scale fisher. According to anthropological data, fishery is often perceived as a 'natural way of life', in contrast with the 'city way of life' that is supposedly characterised with criminality, alienation, consumerism, violence, et cetera (see Einarsson 1996:49; Acheson 1981:296).

One could say that, when considering participative fishing, the desired tourist experience is not limited to the surroundings; it extends to the fishermen and their working day, which in turn becomes the object of the tourist gaze. The nature of the participation in fishing can mostly be linked with the fishery representations in tourist brochures and postcards, while the content of panoramic excursions corresponds with a field that is not close to the fishery motifs in various tourist representations. Rather, it is much closer to the concept of the holiday as a time of leisurely fun. Despite emphasis on the positive connotations of participation in fishing, the fishermen-cum-tourist workers emphasise the appeal of all three forms on offer, in the sense of connecting *the world of fishery with the tourist product.* The world of fishery is to be understood in this statement in an abstract sense and is thus closely related to romanticised tourist (re)presentations of fishery. Not dissimilarly to that seen in *the world of fishery*, the word *tourist* also takes on an abstract role. When generalising, fishermen-tourist workers talk about tourists, but when describing individual instances (such as describing specific trips and the activities that they include), they tend to use more precise terms, talking about women from the countryside, miners, high school students et cetera. Since the adjective tourist tends to have a negative connotation (for example, *...the fishing holiday is not what it used to be, it's become a tourist show...*) the position of not being involved in tourism is a most convenient one.[12] It either makes an excuse for the visitors who allegedly are not tourists, or the hosts who allegedly are not tourist workers but actually fishermen.

In basic terms, there are four explanations presented by the fishermen-tourist workers for their involvement in the tourist industry: the political situation, the economic interest, customer demand and the beneficial ecological effect. The connection between the tourist discourse and customer demand can be elaborated. When asked why tourists choose such a way of spending their free time, the answers produced by the fishermen-tourist workers coincide with the most visible thematic parameters, which correspond to the fishery motifs. Among them are the concepts of relaxation, enjoyment, freedom, contact with nature, a healthy environment, food and the so-called authentic experience.

Although certain assertions in the tourist representations and in my ethnographic evidence are compatible, the discrepancies between the two can also be noticed. One of the reasons for combining fishery with tourist activity, as stressed by fishermen, is the image of fishery as a harmful economic practice, whose replacement with tourist activities is in the 'interest of nature'. Tourist brochures and postcards do not however mention this aspect of fishery. They characterise fishery as a benign, naive and simple activity (the photographs of nets, smaller wooden boats...). Although fishing is actually mentioned frequently as a harmful activity in the media discourse (with the notable exception of instances dealing with 'national pride'), fishery in the tourist discourse is presented in a completely different light: as a romanticised activity. Along these lines, the invitation to participate in an excursion with a fishing boat, as mentioned in the tourist guides, is portrayed by photographs of older wooden boats. In actuality, the excursions take place on larger boats with dragnets. The implicit mention of boats with dragnets cannot be explained only through the prism of aesthetics (the smaller boats supposedly deemed as being more

attractive). It can also be understood in connection with dragnets being seen as a harmful technology, a topic of many discussions among people who are involved in fishery, as well as being mentioned in newspaper articles (see Podbevšek 2001).

Hence, in conclusion, I suggest that the contexts surrounding fishery representations in the selected study material at the same time serve as the focal points through which the ethnographic evidence and the tourist discourse can be brought into a dialogue. They can be divided into three clear contexts: a) the Mediterranean context; b) the context of the sea; c) the context of good old times. To summarise just a few instances in relation to fishery presentations: travelling through an imaginary Mediterranean landscape, becoming entangled in tourist brochures and furthermore, interpreted and brought to life in our mental preconceptions may equate to distancing oneself from the civilised world, to come into contact with the rural and the 'natural'; travelling to the sea may mean to swim and sunbathe, tanned skin, an 'authentic' contact with the outdoors and the sea, freedom and health; the search for contact with a once more common lifestyle means to come in contact with the supposedly good old days, with a just, traditional society... Even if the contact alone is an abstraction, the motives of tanned fishermen, fishing boats at sunset, cleaning colourful nets on a white pier are actually the condensed forms of such demands, admirations, wishes and experiences. These do not only concern the tourist, but also reveal a wider social space. It is most likely that a certain image survives various vacation landscapes, during a certain period the image's content (or maybe just its metaphorical meanings) and thus its message may be altered, while the form apparently remains unchanged. In the tourist brochures and postcards, fishery representations map out only a section of the vacation landscape: it appears that the part of the demand spectre they cover is exactly the one concerning nature, the rudimentary and the times gone by.

Notes

[1] I am very grateful to Taja Kramberger, Braco Rotar, Alenka Janko Spreizer, Irena Šumi, Julie Wilson and Ana Jelnikar. They have contributed to this article by offering extremely helpful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of the text.

[2] The concept of the actor's perspective is being used in the sense of structural organisation of the observation (researcher's observation) that defines the observed.

[3] This article does not take into consideration the perspective of tourists-visitors. This segment will be analysed in future work.

[4] Numbers refer to my ethnographic evidence.

[5] Numbers refer to my ethnographic evidence.

[6] Izola is situated in the bilingual coastal area, where both Italian and Slovene are considered to be official languages.

[7] The word forced, as I understood it, was meant in a way that the interest of visitors had always existed but prior to Slovenia's independent state fishermen were neither prepared for tourist business nor were they interested in it.

[8] Although the statements of my informants do not lean upon concrete articles one could easily trace such information in the Slovene media (comp. Šuligoj 1994, Šoštarši 1994, Šuligoj 1995, Šuligoj 1999, Hlaj 2001).

[9] Osmica (eight) is a name for a special kind of selling and serving vine and food (mainly meat) at home,

introduced by Maria Theresa. The main idea of osmica was that once a year vine-growers were allowed to sell the remaining old vine without taxes for eight days. Nowadays the event called osmica has mainly a tourist character.

[10] Selected tourist brochures and postcards: tourist brochures – Izola-fotovodnik 1995. Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko. Ljubljana; Koper-fotovodnik 1995. Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko. Ljubljana; Piran-fotovodnik 1994. Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko. Ljubljana; Simi Sime 1996. Piran. Ljubljana: Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko; Simi Sime 1996. Izola. Ljubljana: Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko; Simi Sime 1996. Koper. Ljubljana: Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko; Mediteran na vašem pragu-Izola 1998. Izola: Turistino informativni center; Mediteranska Slovenija 1999. Ljubljana: Slovenska turistina zveza; Izola-Isola 1999. Izola: Turistino gospodarsko združenje. Postcards: Slovenska riviera na 14 razglednicah. http://www.si21.com/sisart/razglednice.html; Razglednice sloven-ske obale published by Sidarta and selected postcards of publishing houses Sisart, Confidia, Jugovi & Neve ny.

[11] The term landscape is understood here as a mental category, within a specific time and space dimension. In his article entitled 'L'ethnologie et le paysage', Gerard Lenclud stresses that landscape refers to two levels of reality – subjective and objective; to take this twin subjective-objective as a whole is, in his opinion, a precondition for analysis. The word landscape refers to a specific fragment of the world, as seen through a mental lens; landscape as a mental category must therefore be understood as historically and culturally preconditioned. The conceptual scheme of the tourist discourse which landscapes the coast between Ankaran and Piran is, in regard to what has just been said, just one of the many possible interpretations. Lenclud discusses mainly the topic of landscape as an object of research in ethnology. He concludes that the mental refiguration of a place or object into a specific landscape cannot be observed but just deduced (Lenclud 1995). Following his argument it seems reasonable to talk about the refiguration of a place or an object into a specific landscape in the case of finished landscape representations and its creators. Here surely belong photographers, writers and designers of tourist informative material and postcards. I will limit my analysis to finished representations and, for the time being, leave out the research conducted among the makers of tourist representations and their relationship to the local as well as broader context.

[12] The negative connotation of the word tourist refers to my ethnographic data.

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Fishy Comparisons or Valid Comparisons?
Reflections on a Comparative Approach to the Current Global Fisheries Malaise, With Reference to Indian and Canadian Cases

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ABSTRACT The global crisis in fisheries is a powerful simplification necessary to stimulate resistance to the conditions that foster destructive fishing practices. It is imperative, however, that the crisis be represented in a way that allows for a diversity of experiences of crisis if it is to serve as an effective organizing force. In this paper I propose a comparative methodology drawn from anthropological and feminist sources that may provide the dynamism and flexibility necessary to underpin strategic simplifications such as the global crisis in fisheries. I illustrate that methodology in reference to the evolution of my own research and show how it can clarify the circumstances that led to the rupture in the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers at Loctudy in 2000.

Introduction

In November 1997, someway into my doctoral fieldwork[1] on the fishery of Gujarat, I took a break from my data collection to attend the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF) in New Delhi. On an intellectual level, the trip was inspirational, as I soaked up speeches and participated in workshops with fishers, activists, and academics from maritime areas the globe over. I had a real sense that I was participating in history in the making; that the WFF meeting was a concrete step towards building a global movement for socially and ecologically sustainable fisheries. The meeting was equally exciting at a personal level. In attendance not only were internationally known fisheries activists but also representatives of the National Fishworkers Forum from Gujarat, the state where I was then doing my research, and the Canadian Maritimes,[2] where I had conducted research for my Master's degree in the early 1990s. Among the fisher-activists were Premjibhai Khokhari, who was later to become a key facilitator of my research in Gujarat, and Hérménégilde Robichaud, one of the key informants from my research on the fishing village of Val Comeau in Acadian New-Brunswick. One of my fondest memories of those few days in Delhi was skipping an afternoon session of the meetings so as to tear around the city in a rickshaw with Hérménégilde in search of gifts that he could take back to Val Comeau. I was put into the position of being the 'local' guide and interpreter to Hérménégilde, an abrupt and ironic reversal of roles given my more accustomed position as outsider and neophyte in both Acadie and India.

I begin this paper with the WFF Delhi meetings because they juxtapose so strikingly the central themes of this paper. My key theoretical-methodological concern here is to argue that effective representations rest on the dynamic interplay of simplification and comparison. I illustrate that approach through a reading of my

personal research trajectory. My substantive concern in the paper is to reflect on how the global crisis in fisheries itself might be best represented according to the criteria that I define. I trace the importance of the notion of a global crisis in fisheries in my research and then shift my focus to the WFF. I argue that one reason for the fracture of the WFF at the 2000 meetings in Loctudy, France was a representational failure, particularly around the idea of the global crisis in fisheries. Delhi is an appropriate summary device for this paper because it brings together these themes. At the 1997 meetings, I was connected to my present and past research through the vehicle of an organisation devoted explicitly to a similar purpose as mine: alleviating the global crisis in fisheries for peoples engaged in small scale fishing the world over.

Anthropology, Feminist Theory and Terms of Comparison

Simplification and comparison are basic attributes of human cognition because they allow us to navigate the enormous complexity by which we are surrounded. Simplifications reduce the sensory stimuli that constantly barrage us to manageable levels. One of the key insights of sociology and anthropology is that simplifications are not reformulated anew by each individual but, rather, individuals learn specific patterns of apprehension through enculturation and socialisation. The notion of collectively held simplifications has its popular label in the term stereotype and its more formal academic expression in reification. Reification refers to the process by which ideas acquire such collective weight as truths that they appear as immutable objects, not as negotiable, temporally specific social constructions. Stereotypes have a more pejorative connotation: they refer to the same objectification of ideas as reification but evoke the sense that stereotyping is a narrow and possibly dangerous process.

Comparison is fundamental to human perception in two ways. First, it is one technique by which reality is organised. Comparison allows us to categorise some things as like and others as unlike. In this sense it is a kind of simplification. Second, and most germane to the argument of this paper, comparison underpins the agency that limits the power of socially constituted simplifications and leads to their reconfiguration. Reference to alternatives is central to the ability of humans to re-complicate their realities and to reconstitute their modes of apperception.[3] The flux between simplification and challenges to simplification through comparison is at the heart of this paper.

An illustration of the tension between simplification and comparison relevant to this paper is the issue of representation in anthropology. In recent years there has been much debate within the discipline over the validity of ethnographic representation. The portrayal of other cultures had been resolved for a time in the middle decades of the 20th Century with the institutionalisation of the ethnographic narrative based on the personal and authoritative experience of the ethnographer (Clifford 1988:30-37). The simplified representation of a culture by a Mead or a Radcliffe-Brown was held as an accurate depiction of its reality. Interpretive and post-modern trends in anthropology from the 1970s challenged the representational claims of the mid-20th Century ethnographic form (Clifford 1988). Critics pointed to the ambiguities and contradictions in the ethnographic record that anthropolo-

gists sought to suppress in their unified constructions. The late 20th Century anthropological recompilation of itself has changed the terrain of simplification and comparison. Such supra-individual simplifications as society and culture have been redefined as fragmented, shifting, overlapping, and contested.[4] The comparison of discreet cultures has been complicated but new avenues for learning from multiple comparative perspectives have been opened. While the authority of the individual ethnographer has been undermined, new and more inclusive methods of representation have been defined.

Responses to the changed parameters of representation in anthropology have been creative and diverse (for example, Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Clifford 1988; Fischer 1999; Marcus 1999). It is not my intention here to synthesise the many reconsiderations of ethnography of the past 20 years that have tried to incorporate greater contingency and movement into representation. Rather, I have chosen to base my discussion of an alternative comparative method underlying representation on Marilyn Strathern's Partial Connections (1991), a work that draws from anthropology and feminist theory.

Strathern's purpose, to reflect on how anthropologists might make representational claims about their subjects of study, relates closely to the general problem of simplification and comparison in the face of complexity. Strathern argues, in reference to anthropological representational practice, that complexity cannot be fixed but must rather be approximated by following a dynamic methodology based on scales and partial connections. She employs scales as a way of depicting positions; they stand for the innumerable places from which one can perceive an issue of concern. Scales are innumerable. They can consist of intellectual constructs such as theoretical or disciplinary stances, which she calls domains, or they can change through the magnification or telescoping of physical spaces, as in the focusing on particular elements of a case or through the expansion of the number of cases under consideration. These two broad categorisations of scales are themselves not distinct as one could imagine the magnification within a domain or telescoping out so as to include more domains (Strathern 1991:xiv-xv).

Close examination from each scale reveals huge complexity. Comparison involves juxtaposing different scales, which is problematic as each scale shift for comparison entails a multiplication of the already intense levels of complexity (Strathern 1991:xiv). Comparisons therefore necessitate a reduction of focus even as they bring to light aspects of issues of concern and of scales themselves that were previously obscured (Strathern 1991:xiv, 108). Strathern describes the methodological process of comparison as one of partial connections. We are only ever able to partially grasp the connections between things being compared and those connections themselves are only ever partial. We should, nonetheless, make claims even on the imperfect understanding of our partiality with the caveat that our claim is an imperfect simplification subject to revision through exposure to new scales. In this sense partial connections, as a basis for comparison, are dialectical as they demand an unending movement of approximate representations.

The constant adjustments evoked by partial connections as a comparative methodology is also reflected in Gayatri Spivak's notion of strategic essentialisations. Spivak argues that essentialisms are necessary simplifying mediators of the com-

plexities of life and that active political engagement demands choosing to be guided by particular simplifications.[5] Like Strathern, however, Spivak insists that we have to be vigilant in relation to such constructions even while using them as they have '…the unavoidable usefulness of something that is very dangerous' (Spivak 1989: 129). Thus, for her, a strategic essentialist position is one that engages with the concepts of the world, but recognizes their provisionality and their political and power potentialities. In her words:

> It seems to me that the awareness of strategy - the strategic use of an essence as a mobilizing slogan or masterword like woman or worker or the name of any nation that you would like - it seems to me that this critique has to be persistent all along the way, even when it seems that to remind oneself of it is counterproductive (Spivak 1989:125).

That counterproductivity might manifest itself as a sense of hindrance, an obstacle to getting things done or as an overly obsessive reflexivity. Nonetheless, the constant taking stock, which can seem an annoying kind of second-guessing, is the reaching out to other positions as a perennial adjustment and resistance to reification. The dynamism that is most strongly apparent in Spivak's strategic essentialism but which also underpins Strathern's partial connections contributes to a reconceptualisation of validity as a measure of methodological effectiveness. Standard sociological measurement validity is the degree to which imagined constructs are connected to concrete indicators of that construct (Neuman 1997:141). Such a definition depends on the assumption that unitary shared understandings of construct and external reality exist. The positionality underlying strategic essentialism and partial connections opposes the idea of such perfect congruence in understanding (cf. Strathern 1991:xiv, note 2). Validity from a positional perspective rejects the idea of a reality as a knowable object-like essence and when strategically employing constructs recognises how they are partially composed. Constructs are a negotiated field in which differences are recognised.

I am now able to answer the promise of my title and make a few claims about validity and comparison. Fishy comparisons, from a positional perspective, are those that base themselves on unreflexive essentialisations. That is, they assume a direct comparability of transparent cases without considering questions of scale, complexity, and incommensurability. Valid comparisons integrate the latter considerations, seeing alternatives as positions rather than essences. The movement between positions does not imply a perfect comprehension of either position, but the partial connection produced by the juxtaposition nonetheless shifts self-awareness and alters guiding strategic essentialisations.

Positioning the Global Crisis of Fisheries

As one of the most important connections between my research and the mandate of the WFF is the shared strategic simplification that the world is facing a fisheries crisis, it makes sense to begin my substantive discussion with a few words on how to

conceptualise that crisis. A first observation on the idea of a global crisis of fisheries is that it presents the scale problem of how to reconcile a putative global crisis with multiple different local experiences of that crisis. For example, if there is a diversity of experiences of fishing and overfishing just among the neighbouring fishing communities in Nova Scotia (for example Apostle and Barrett 1992), how can it make sense to bring the entire world of fishers and fishing communities under the same umbrella? One answer is that despite the vast differences that separate fishing communities world wide, there are certain global historical changes that have occurred that affect them all. These can be housed roughly under the rubric of globalisation and include such factors as the establishment of a market for fish that is truly global in reach, where certain major corporations dominate the fish trade, the spread of similar ideas, techniques, and technologies of production to most fisheries of the world, and the predominance of interventionist states following high modernist ideologies of development (Scott 1998:88-90).[6] Globalisation, though a concept much more fully explored and theorised than the notion of a global fisheries crisis, is open nonetheless to a similar critique: an unreflexively employed globalisation glosses over the vast diversity of different engagements with the forces of which it is composed. Seeing global fisheries unity through globalisation is thus only a partial answer.

A more satisfying answer to the question of how to talk of the shared connections between fishers at a global scale is to address it from the perspective of a positional approach. First we have to acknowledge that the global fisheries crisis is a notion that is constructed for political purposes. My interests, and those of the WFF, are in mobilising fishers and their supporters in an alliance (World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers 1998). A central element of that position, as important and contentious for the practice of the WFF as it is for my research, is support for artisanal, small-scale but labour intensive fishing practice against industrial, capital-intensive corporate fishing (McGoodwin 1990; Kurien 1996). I recognize the gross simplification of that binary statement, but hold it up as a starting point for further specification. The global fisheries crisis is thus a strategic essentialism as is the alliance that mobilises to challenge its causes; it does not correspond to any external unitary reality, but is composed of multiple partially connecting experiences of resource degradation and social upheaval. It is fruitful to consider globalisation, with its interwoven global and local scales, from a similar analytical standpoint. Recognition of the constructed nature of the global fisheries crisis (or globalisation) and of the partial connections that make it possible does not weaken its political effectiveness as a mobilising concept. On the contrary, it gives the movement against global resource degradation, corporate overfishing, state simplifications of complex fishery systems, and the destruction of fisher livelihoods resilience, adaptability, and power.

GLOBAL DIFFERENCES AND GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

I started this paper with an anecdotal account of my participation in the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers in New Delhi in 1997. That experience provides a convenient and meaningful frame for my examination of the utility of a positional methodology for practice in personal and institutional contexts. The

first part of my discussion re-interprets moments from my trajectory as a researcher through the lens of a positional approach, demonstrating the momentum given to my research trajectory by the encounter with new scales. The second part considers the institutional breakdown that occurred in the WFF at Loctudy. I conclude by arguing for the advantages of bringing together individual researchers and social movements and note that political commitment and methodological rigour must complement each other as a basis for the articulation of research and practice.

Fishing in Canada, Fishing in India

The most dramatic juxtaposition that I experienced at the 1997 WFF meetings was seeing Hérénégilde and Premjibhai in the same room. While they symbolised the main axis of comparison in my research history, other people representing less direct but still important and revealing comparisons were also present. On the Canadian side, Gastien Godin, who had previously been the director of the Association des pêcheurs professionnels Acadiens, and Parzival Copes, an important Canadian fisheries economist, were also in attendance. On the Indian side were well-known scholars and activists including John Kurien, Nalini Nayak, Sebastian Mathew, and the charismatic leader Thomas Kocherry. Together these participants offered a rich array of positions from which to re-examine my own research in Canada and India and to examine the connections between the two. Beyond that group was another ring of participants with whose work I was not familiar, but who presented yet further possibilities of contrasting experience. It would be beside the point here to try to chart the influence on me of each of the names I mention above. What I will do instead is to re-trace moments in my research trajectory from a positional perspective, focusing particularly on the tension between comparison and simplification. I have chosen to present those moments in broadly chronological sequence.

Val Comeau and Atlantic Canada

An arbitrary beginning would be going lobster fishing with Hérménégilde in August of 1993, towards the end of my first field work, and listening to him recount the tribulations of trying to convince the strong-willed fishers of Val Comeau that participation in their Maritime Fisherman's Union local was worth their while. I talked to many other residents of Val Comeau and neighbouring communities that summer about a whole range of issues. Being new to fieldwork and not being quite sure exactly what I was doing, I was willing to ask questions and listen to more or less anyone who had interesting things to say or to anyone who was recommended to me as someone who would have interesting things to say. Over the course of the summer, I found myself increasingly focusing on a few key informants from Val Comeau, including Hérménégilde, on the topic of the historical development of the material conditions of life in Val Comeau. Hérménégilde, for example, while piloting his boat, setting the scallop drag, or frying up scallop livers for lunch, warned me about the complexities of union mobilising in one's own very small community while teaching me a few of the basic principles of how to fish for lobster and scallops. He also made it clear that there was considerable difference between the inshore fish-

ers of Val Comeau and the mid-shore fishers of Shippagan and Caraquet. Inshore fishers harboured mixed feelings towards the larger scale fishers, resenting their perceived high impact on the fish and their greater wealth. Other inhabitants of Val Comeau, particularly the amateur historian and conteur Livain Sonier, filled out Hérménégilde's account by sharing with me their recollections of the changes that had occurred in Val Comeau since the 1920s.

I spent the fall and winter of 1993-94 trying to create a coherent narrative out of the complex mass of information that was my field notes and the secondary sources that I had picked up along the way. This was the first large simplification of my life as a researcher. There was nothing more than vaguely strategic about it. If I had any epistemological model at that point, it was simply one of synthesis. I was attracted to Marxist theory as a binding agent for its critical and progressive promise. In the end, I produced an expansive and improperly digested mix of modes of production and ethnographic historical reconstruction. Even if the overall form was not pretty, the effort gave me a several useful points of reference that positioned me for my later research in India. These consisted of a few guiding insights into various scales within the Atlantic Canadian fishery.

Four scales from my Acadian research linger particularly strongly in my mind as points of reference: history; the household; the state; and fishing. It is hard to grasp the idea of history as a scale or as a position, given that it is constant change. Given our only partial knowledge of the past, and the positionality of memory, moments from history can only be approximate simplifications. Despite the ambiguity that underlies historical interpretation, however, the positions that are created in historical reconstruction are critical counter-points to the present. While I tried to capture the shifting nature of historical change in my writing on Val Comeau, I still reduced the complexity of that change to a comparison of before and after, with an imagined point of transition occurring in the middle 1950s with the introduction of unemployment insurance for fishers. That particular state intervention was a critical moment in the transition of material life in Val Comeau and I return to it shortly.

The household has been a fundamental scale of analysis for my work in Canada and India. In Val Comeau, the household has been the site that has articulated gender, class and work in the provision of livelihood for the members of the community. I will not elaborate on the complex patterns of work that prevailed in the community in the pre and post 1950s periods other than to say that in the earlier period fishing, farming, and logging formed the economic base of the community. Men worked as fishers and loggers while sharing the farm work with women who also had primary responsibility for household productive and reproductive tasks. The predominant work in fishing was done for credit, primarily for the W.S. Loggie Company. Logging was wage work that involved lengthy winter migrations. Women also had access to some wage work in lobster canning, blueberry picking, and other poorly remunerated jobs important for household livelihood.

I argue in my work on Val Comeau that there was a dramatic historical shift over the period of my study in the household organisation of work, a transition in which the Canadian federal government played a central role (Johnson 1999). Farming and forestry have all but disappeared as part of the livelihood of Val Comeau's inhabitants, their contribution to household income replaced largely by unemploy-

ment insurance benefits (UI). Large-scale subsistence farming was abandoned in the 1950s and 1960s with the introduction of UI, which made farming redundant when UI payments allowed for the purchase of foodstuffs throughout the winter months. An important consequence of the provision of cash to the villagers of Val Comeau on a regular basis was to give them greater access to the commodity economy. Seen from another perspective, this was an important step in the globalisation of the community. Initially work in forestry remained a vibrant sector in which the men of Val Comeau could earn their UI credits. By the 1980s, however, mechanisation in the industry had eliminated logging as a possibility for all but a couple of men from Val Comeau.

State intervention was also critical in changing the nature of fishing, the fourth major scale of my research in Val Comeau. The intent of the Canadian government from the 1950s was to modernise and professionalise Canada's fisheries. The fishers of Val Comeau had already indicated their eagerness to increase their productivity in the 1930s and 1940s by beginning to purchase larger boats and by beginning the mechanisation process. They also took advantage of financial weaknesses of WS Loggie to escape from the debt relations that the company had held them in. This led to the departure of WS Loggie in 1958. In 1961, the first federal loans were made available for the purchase of equipment for fishing. In 1967, lobster was the first species for which fishing licenses were introduced. By 1976 all species caught by the fishers of Val Comeau had become subject to licensing restrictions. Accompanying the expansion of government regulation was the increasing sophistication and cost of fishing technology, with depth sounders, cb radios, mechanical winching systems, high-powered diesel engines, and now cell phones becoming the norm. Government restrictions on who could fish and the dramatic cost increases of fishing combined to professionalise the fishery of Val Comeau. Where up to the 1950s, fishing was just one component of the livelihood strategies of all households in Val Comeau by the 1980s it had become a valued and exclusive profession controlled by some of the households in the village.

For the purposes of narrative clarity, I have drawn together the four scales that I have considered in a superficially balanced sketch of Val Comeau. Onto a historical backbone, I have noted key social, political, and economic factors. I could conceive of multiple substantial rewritings of this little sketch by plunging into details on each scale or on sub-scales such as gender relations, technology, or political patronage. Val Comeau the small village of 550 residents could unfold sufficient stories and partial connections to keep a scholar occupied for many careers. I could also draw out the conflicts in interpretation and shortcomings in data that considering Val Comeau from a multi-scale perspective brings. For the moment I wish to conclude the simplification of Val Comeau that I have presented here by elaborating how elements of it can contribute to a broader political project, a scale of strategic simplification that can serve as one way of organising my understanding of Val Comeau's many scales.

The dominant, media enhanced image that Canadians hold of the Atlantic fishery is one of tragic ecological collapse. This is an essentialism that accurately captures the intensity and severity of the crisis that much of Atlantic Canada has experienced. Nonetheless, looking at this image from Val Comeau introduces an element of discordance. The fishery of Val Comeau came through the 1980s and 1990s

rather well; if its fishers did not become rich and if there was not as much flexibility and openness in the fishery as there once was, at least they still had the basis for their livelihoods. A cornerstone of the success of fishing in Val Comeau has been lobster, the relatively stationary nature of which makes it much easier to manage than species like the northern cod. Lobster provides the most important economic return for the fishers of the village. As important as this biological advantage, however, and more important in strategic import, is the relatively small-scale nature of the Val Comeau fishery. The combination of timely state restriction on lobster fishing, the avoidance of its pillage by more 'efficient' harvesting techniques like trawling, the continuance of small scale techniques with associated indigenous regulations on fishing areas, and the diversity of fish targeted by passive catch technology that the fishers of Val Comeau pursued represent a relatively successful model for comparison elsewhere.

Gujarat

I met Premjibhai Khokhari for the first time at the WFF meetings in Delhi, although his reputation as one of Gujarat's foremost fisher organisers preceded him. I knew already that he was the lead player in helping establish a branch of the Indian National Fishworkers Forum in Porbanda (NFF). After the November 1997 meetings, it was to be almost a year until I met Premjibhai again because, as with my research in Atlantic Canada, I chose to focus most of my effort on a single village, Dhamlej, that was several hours by bus away from Premjibhai's office in Porbandar.

I chose Dhamlej for several reasons. In scale terms, it had parallels with my research in Val Comeau. Both Val Comeau and Dhamlej are villages, although that term is a relative one. In the Canadian context, Val Comeau's 550 residents make it a not unusual village. In India it would be a hamlet at best. The 7,600 residents of Dhamlej would make it the size of a small town in Canada. More importantly, however, Dhamlej was similar to Val Comeau in that its fishers used fishing technology that was small scale in Gujarat terms. Outboard motorboats of 26 to 36 feet in length and nylon gillnets were standard equipment in Dhamlej, small scale in comparison to the larger wooden gillnet boats and trawlers with which they share the coastal waters. The research problem that I posed myself for Gujarat built on the formulations of my earlier research in Atlantic Canada. I envisaged an historical ethnographic approach that would deal with the interlinked topics of state intervention, transition to a commodity fish economy, and resource depletion. The latter scale of research was a new addition, reflecting changes in my interests and the greater amount of time that I would have at my disposal for this doctoral research. I chose Dhamlej for another reason that differentiated the research in Gujarat: it was within easy reach of Veraval, the largest trawler fishing port in Gujarat. My ambition for the Gujarat project was to introduce the perspective of trawler fishers as a new scale of comparison.

During the formulation of my research focus for Gujarat and during most of my research, I saw Gujarat through a prism that in at least one major way was deeply etched by my preceding and much shorter research in New Brunswick. Despite evidence that mounted over the course of my fieldwork in Gujarat, I failed to make sufficient distinction between the roles of the state in the fisheries of Val Comeau and Gujarat. I continued to adhere to a picture of the state as a powerful external

regulating force, an institution that exercised a great degree of influence on the direction of change in the fishery. It was not until a meeting with John Kurien at the Centre for Development Studies in Trivandrum in December 1998 that my deeply held assumption was abruptly challenged. I asserted to Dr. Kurien my impression of the Gujarat Department of Fisheries as an interventionist force and he challenged me by stating that the success of the Gujarat Department of fisheries was precisely in the way that it had left much control of fisheries management to the fishers themselves. His statement left me rather tongue tied for the rest of our meeting as I was trying to sort through the wreckage of the simplification that had so far guided my interpretation of the role of the state in the Gujarat fishery. It took me two more years to reassemble the pieces and to reformulate my understanding of the role of the Gujarat government in the development of the State's fishery. I now view the Gujarat government as having played a critical role in fisheries development, but have realised that it has done so almost exclusively in the capacity of introducing and subsidising new technologies of production and processing. Unlike the Canadian state, it has been completely absent from the sphere of regulation. Both states have shared production focused, high modernist approaches to development but their different capacities for action have given different degrees of space for agency to different interests in their fisheries. There is a partial connection between the models of state intervention in Atlantic Canada and Gujarat, but one that is quite different from my initial conception. I speculate further on that difference shortly when I introduce a comparison with fisheries development in Kerala.

The greater length of time I had for my Gujarat research allowed me to spend considerably more time contextualising Dhamlej as my ethnographic research site. As part of that contextualisation, I was concerned particularly to examine the role of the state in fisheries development. I have touched on that effort above. I was also concerned to introduce other scales of comparison into my work. I had hoped initially to make research forays into the regions of Kachchh and South Gujarat, the fishing areas furthest from my research site, in order to get comparative data from all major coastal regions of the state comparisons. Time did not permit their inclusion, so I had to content myself with comparative data gleaned from secondary sources and from migrant fishers from those regions. I did, however, conduct several comparative research trips along the coast of the Saurashtra region in which Dhamlej was located. Those trips augmented in particular my knowledge of trawler fishing. Whereas, in my New Brunswick research, I had to depend on other academic work to establish intra-regional comparisons with other modes of fishing, in Gujarat I have been able to make comparisons based on my own data.

The end result of my research in Gujarat was a plethora of scales of analysis. Within Dhamlej itself, gender, class, caste, kinship, religion, and faction combined in numerous partially connected ways to shape identity and social relations. From the position of the village, relations with the exterior moved along caste links, kinship ties and economic connection mediated by the wealthy merchants of the village. A Muslim fisher from Dhamlej village, for example, might have crewed his boats with Hindu labouring caste workers from the neighbouring agricultural village. His wife might have taken part of the low value catch for sale in the local market town, another part of that catch might have gone to a dry fish merchant from Kerala,

while he might have sold the best fish in his catch to a Muslim fish merchant from a neighbouring village who then might have sold the catch in Veraval. Each of those relationships and each of those aspects of life in Dhamlej would unfold further levels of complex detail. Yet, from the perspective of Veraval, Dhamlej would seem just one of a dozen neighbouring fishing villages all using similar gillnet techniques. From Veraval, suddenly Bombay, Europe and China acquire much greater immediacy as the fish packed in Veraval's many fish processing plants is stamped with those markets as their destination.

I have just given a glimpse of the complex linkages running through the Gujarat fishery and connecting it to places elsewhere. In order to make sense of that complexity one has to turn to simplifications. One of the positional simplifications that I have been fleshing out, with help from John Kurien's well-placed comments, is the historical view of the state as a development agent. Another is the changes in social relations that have occurred in the specific space of Dhamlej. A third is the historical bifurcation between trawler fishers and gillnet fishers that has occurred in Gujarat and the relevance of that split for class relations at a regional level. All of these entry points into the complexity of the Gujarat fishery are partially connected to each other and together[7] provide partial substantiation for the strategic simplification that there is a global fisheries crisis. That crisis contains within it hundreds of distinct routes to resource degradation, all of which nonetheless share sufficient connections to make them comparable. I can be more specific in this regard by bringing the experience of Gujarat together with that of Kerala.

Kerala

My task is made somewhat easier by the fact that Kerala is already present in Gujarat. Keralites have been an important presence in the Gujarat fishery at least as far back as the 1950s. Since the early days of the Gujarat fishing industry, the processing sector has boasted numerous Keralite owners. Educated men from Kerala were an important contingent in the Gujarat Department of Fisheries. The entire skilled labour force in the processing industry is composed of temporary migrant women from Kerala. Even the traditional pilani gillnet boats of Gujarat were made of logs from the forests of Malabar. There has been an important Keralite contribution to the development of the Gujarat fishing industry.

Despite the strength of Keralite numbers in the Gujarat fishery, the histories of fisheries development in Gujarat and Kerala are quite different. Neither state has matched the comprehensiveness of intervention of the Canadian state in the management of fishing and fishing communities but the government of Kerala has been more deeply involved in its fishery than that of Gujarat. A plausible explanation for this difference lies in the different mores regarding fish in Kerala and Gujarat. Fish has historically formed a central part of the diet of the inhabitants of Kerala, whether Hindu, Muslim, or Christian. Gujaratis, in contrast are much more loathe to consume fish. Part of this may have been due to the difficulty of transporting fish from the coast to Gujarat's main population centres in the past. A more important reason, however, is the staunch Hindu vegetarianism of Gujarat. Despite having the highest fish catches of all Indian states, the residents of Gujarat consume the least fish per capita (Somavanshi 1998). The marginality of fish to the diet of Gujarat and the stigma attached

to fishing as a profession may explain why the prosecution of the Gujarat fishery has been left almost entirely to coastal communities and particularly coastal fishing castes. Keeping fishing the preserve of fishers has allowed Gujarat to avoid the serious tensions that have plagued Kerala since the 1970s. Rather than providing the means for its fishing communities to develop the fishery themselves, the Kerala government facilitated the entry of non-fisher private businesses into fishing. These entrepreneurs invested in large-scale trawling and ring seine equipment, which constituted a major threat to the livelihoods of Kerala's artisanal fishers. Small-scale fishers reacted to the incursions of the newcomers with protests and violence, but were to some degree pacified when the government of Kerala offered them concessions on mechanisation. The wholesale mechanisation of the Kerala fleet over the 1970s and 1980s has led to serious concerns about resource degradation (Kurien 1978; Kurien 1991).

Throughout the entire period of upheaval over the fisheries resources of Kerala, the fishers of Gujarat enjoyed a steady boom, which raised their standard of living across the board. It was not until the early 1990s that the first signs of trouble in the Gujarat fishery appeared in the form of widespread declining catches per unit of effort (Johnson 2000; Johnson 2001). It was not until the price declines associated with the East Asian economic downturn of the late 1990s, however, that the fishers of Gujarat acknowledged that they faced a serious problem. Unlike Canada, blame for the overfishing was not directed at the government, but rather at different players within and outside of the industry. Trawler owners pinned the blame for overfishing on the joint-venture factory trawlers that had been plying Gujarat's waters and on fishing during the monsoon by smaller gillnet boats. Gillnet fishers directed their criticisms at trawling in general, including the trawlers of their fellow fishers in Gujarat, towards whom they feel a considerable amount of resentment.

While there are clear differences in opinion on the causes of overfishing in Gujarat, there has been none of the open conflict over resources that has plagued Kerala. An important part of the explanation for the peace that reigns in the Gujarat fishery can be found in the different approach to fisheries development followed in the state. The willingness of the Gujarat government facilitate the modernisation of the fishery but to leave management of the fishery to its fisher communities has meant that bonds of caste and locality have so far prevented outbursts of violence between trawler fishers and gill net fishers. The rapid development of the fishery has led to growing class divisions, but these also have yet to act as mobilising positions for the fishers of Gujarat. Despite the relative calm that prevails in the Gujarat fishery, Premjibhai Khokhari and the National Fish Workers Forum in Gujarat will have to bear the underlying gear based tensions in mind. At the time of my research, the Gujarat branch of the NFF only represented trawler fishers. This is somewhat puzzling as the trawler sector is precisely the sector against which the Kerala branch of the NFF was formed. If the NFF desires the negotiation of broad-based solutions to the resource difficulties that the Gujarat fishery faces, it will need to reach out to the members of other gear groups.

Through the foregoing discussion, I have tried to give a sense of the multiple positions that are possible in looking at Val Comeau and at the fisheries of Gujarat and Kerala. There are numerous productive points of comparison between and among the three cases. I tried to adopt a deliberately fluid writing style in order to

capture the flow of ideas that juxtapositions between different places and positions create. The result is somewhat disappointing for its failure to pursue in detail all of the different directions in which I could have gone. At the same time the result is slightly disorienting for its failure to stick closely to any one analytical position. This tension between the energy of partial connections and the desire for establishing guiding positions gives a sense of the methodology that this paper seeks to describe. Left there, however, it is inadequate because it misses the political element of strategic simplifications. Effective strategic simplification means that certain guiding assumptions have to remain at the centre of the process of making partial connections. In the case of my work in India and Canada, therefore, this means looking for continued refreshment in comparison but also trying to keep returning to the position that there is a global crisis in fishing that has been caused in great part by production processes influenced by high modernist ideas. That crisis and the political claims pinpointing its causes have direct potential to mobilise fishers, fishworkers, and their supporters as the WFF demonstrates. At the same time, however, tensions within the WFF arise from an attempt, similar to that in my work, to balance guiding strategic simplifications against the partial connections between the groups that compose the organisation.

THE WORLD FORUM OF FISH HARVESTERS AND FISH WORKERS

Reflection on the importance and perils of bringing together fishers from geographically distant places is exemplified by the meeting of the WFF in Loctudy in 2000 where it became clear that an initial consensus between the different parties involved inadequately accounted for their differences. Conflicting claims of legitimacy fed into struggles for power and position, obscuring the linkages of solidarity that brought representatives from all regions of the globe together in the first place. My personal research history just happens to be an unintended parallel of a central rift within the WFF. When the Loctudy meetings in 2000 broke apart into two separate factions, Hérménégilde and the fishers of Northern Europe and Canada were on one side and Premjibhai and the fishers of India and the South were on the other. One purpose of writing this paper, therefore, is as a way for me to reflect on a division that directly challenges my own experience with small-scale fishers and my hopes that their international solidarity can challenge the global predominance of destructive fishing practice.

In reflecting on the divisions in the WFF that blew up in Loctudy, I don't claim to have more than a fragmentary knowledge of the historical process of negotiations that underwrote the entire organisation or of the different parties involved in the Forum. Nor would I be so bold to suggest a solution to heal those rifts. I propose simply to reflect on a terminological flashpoint that goes to the heart of the dispute at the WFF and offer some reflections on the lessons it offers from the point of view of simplification and comparison.

The idea of a global organisation of fish harvesters and fish workers goes at least as far back to discussions among fisheries activists in India and elsewhere in the early 1980s.[8] The WFF was officially proposed in a meeting of fishers' organisations in Québec in November 1995. The purpose of the Québec meeting was to pressure

for the inclusion of fish harvesters and fishworkers in global fora such as the FAO Symposium of World Food Security that was occurring in Quebec City at the same time. At the fishers' meeting it was decided that the only way to gain enough clout to bring about such changes was to form a global forum of fishers. The forum's mandate in particular would be to oppose industrial forms of fishing that its members deemed to be the principal cause of overfishing and the principal threat to fisher livelihoods globally (Kurien 1997).

The WFF meeting in New Delhi in 1997 was held to define the goals and strategies of the organisation. The culmination of the 1997 meetings was the acceptance of a provisional charter for the organisation. One of the overall objectives of the WFF, as expressed in its Charter for the Interim Arrangement for the Operation of the World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers, was to '…secure preferential access for small- and medium-scale, artisanal, and traditional fishers, and indigenous peoples to coastal resources on which they have historically depended.' Later in the document, the Charter further labelled the groups that fell within its purview as including: fish harvesters and crew members directly engaged in fishing harvesting in small and medium boats; crew members of other fishing units; mass based organisations of women in fishing; and, fishworkers engaged in processing who are not merchants (World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers 1998:52). There is a clear attempt in the document to be as explicit as possible about the large constituency on behalf of which the WFF sought to speak but that was a difficult task as the WFF had to be sufficiently exclusive so as to not dilute its core membership while still allowing for the participation of groups from the North and South.

The rift that sundered the WFF at Loctudy was a sharp indication of its failure to meet the daunting institutional challenge of how to integrate multiple organisations that are significantly different in composition, purpose, and operation and which represent extremely diverse regions. In the analytical terms of this paper, the WFF had to reconcile a variety of positions around two key mobilising simplifications. The first was the need to address the global crisis in fisheries. The second was that the fishers' organisations gathered under the auspices of the WFF were sufficiently similar in terms of their relationship to that crisis that they could work together to address it. The consensus at Loctudy came apart around the second simplification, but also reflected on the construction of the first.

I am not aware of the precise series of events at Loctudy that led to the split of the WFF. Post-Loctudy analyses point to the flaring of differences due to bruised egos and struggles for control of the organisation, particularly between the Canadians and the Indians (O'Riordan 2000:7-8; Santiago 2001). It is unclear given the overall common purpose of the WFF what specifically provoked the power struggle that developed. O'Riordan ascribes it to different organisational bases and modes of action while Santiago states that it developed as the Indians tried to defend themselves against Canadian attempts to assert their 'supremacy' (O'Riordan 2000:7; Santiago 2001:31).

I am most interested in reflecting on the general context of the split that relates to difficulties with the two simplifications underlying the WFF that I introduce above. The WFF failed to build a convincing argument for its constituents that fishers of the North and South shared a similar identity and relationship to fishing.

One major difference between the fishers of North and South that contributed to shattering the construction of unity within the WFF was the distinction between professional fishers and artisanal fishers. Organisations from the North America and Europe, and in particular the Canadians, asserted an identity as professionals while Asian and African delegations to the WFF defined themselves as representing artisanal fishers. This distinction is important in livelihood, organisational, and technological terms. The label of professional implies a small-scale entrepreneurial ethos where fishing has shifted from a community orientation to a business orientation. Professional organisations in North America and Europe tend to be aggregations of individuals who negotiate with the government for special considerations. The artisanal fisher label, in contrast, emphasises collective community identities and traditional connection to the fishery while the organisational style is of mass mobilisation and protest as a means of negotiation with the state. A further difference between the two groups is that professional fishers of the northern countries tend to pursue a more capital-intensive mode of fishing than those of the South (cf. O'Riordan 2000). Voices from the South advocating an artisanal model of fishing largely prevailed in drafting the 1997 Charter of the WFF: in the long list of types of acceptable fishers in that document, professional is not an adjective that appears. There was sufficient ambiguity in that list, however, to allow for the inclusion of fishers from the North and South with the allowance that small and medium fishers could become members of the Forum. As the document did not define the precise size parameters for determination of small and medium, fishers representing considerably different scales of fishing could join the Forum.

The tension between fishers from the North and South over collective identification was already present at the 1997 World Forum. A major point of debate at the meetings was whether the trawler fishing practiced by fisher representatives from some Northern countries put them in contravention of the basic criteria for membership of the WFF. Fishers from the South argued that such techniques were industrial in nature and therefore represented a direct threat to artisanal fishing. Northern members of the Forum practicing trawling argued that their position in relative terms in their home countries made them equivalent to artisanal fishers in the South even if they employed much more intensive fishing craft and gear types.

The assertive use of terms like professional and the participation in the WFF by fishers who in Indian terms would be large scale was bound to provoke tension between members of the WFF. The concerns held by members of southern countries would have been reinforced by the knowledge that their northern counterparts were from the same countries that were the source of the bigger trawler vessels that had been stripping southern waters. If northern delegations did not tread lightly and self-consciously in their dealings with the south, it would not be at all surprising that relations between the two groups deteriorated into power struggles.

There are now two options for the global movement of fishworkers: maintaining the separation of Northern and Southern fisher's groups or trying to re-coalesce the WFF as a global organisation. There is some logic to maintaining two distinct international fishers' organisations as real occupational differences do separate them. In terms of attaining both the short and long-term goals of the WFF, however, an organisation with global reach would be preferable. Not only would the larger

group have greater clout in contributing to meetings on global fisheries governance and in resisting large-scale industrial overfishing but it would be forced to confront terminological, technological, and social divisions that threaten not only North-South solidarity but are increasingly surfacing in southern fisheries.

If indeed there were a successful attempt to bring the WFF back together as an international coalition, it would seem fundamental that it internalise a heightened capacity for self-reflection. Participants in the WFF would have to strive to constantly bear in mind the partiality of their connections to one another in the context of strategic simplifications that will face constant and necessary challenges to their legitimacy. They are coming together for shared ambitions, but those ambitions themselves require different optics depending on the position of each of the participants in the overall project. It is imperative that all parties engage constantly in the attempt to re-situate themselves as others in a process that tries to accommodate difference as part of its strategy. A first step in that direction for the WFF might be to re-consider the apparent binary opposition that has developed between artisanal and professional. Neither Hérménégilde nor Premjibhai's constituents, on close inspection, would appear to fit either category very well.[9]

Conclusion

An important part of overcoming the differences between groups that formerly constituted the WFF may come from the acknowledgement that their interaction can actually strengthen the organisation by forcing the recognition that similar divisions as occur between the North and South also occur within each region. This would be an important step in moving towards recognising the strategic value of partial connections as an idea. Similarly, in my research increasing effort to be conscious of shifts in scale and of the altered vision such shifts bring should allow me to strengthen the validity of my arguments. In both the cases of collective activist struggle and individual research, however, at some point judgements have be made on the degree to which interactions or findings conform to core interests. The strength of those judgements rests on how convincingly they have articulated perspectives from multiple scales around the central interests. For a time the successful strategic simplifications that result hold until the next round of challenge from an altered set of scales. The accommodation of researchers and institutions to the dynamic though unsettling methodology of partial connections enables fluid responses that match shifting conditions of the global crisis in fisheries.

At several points above I have hinted at the connection between individual researchers such as myself and activist organisations like the WFF. In my case the ideal of global fisheries solidarity and activism around the issue of industrial overfishing has been a key point of connection to the WFF. Reinforcing such ideological affinity is a further compatibility between activist organisations and researchers. The process of institutional self-reflection is enhanced by the presence of individuals associated with different scales. An individual researcher faces fewer institutional constraints than his or her counterparts who represent different organisations while those representing institutions can remind individual researchers of the necessity of

institutional constraints for effective co-ordination of action. Further, researchers often have experience working at different scales, including different places, which makes them useful in facilitating partial connections for international activist organisations, because they literally embody them. My experience with Hérménégilde in New Delhi demonstrates that interpreter's role quite well. The sensitivity of researchers to partial connections can also give them the important function of maintaining institutional auto-critique, even if they sometimes earn ill will for doing so. None of these abilities, of course, are the sole domain of researchers.

From a personal and professional point of view, the split that occurred at Loctudy was a disaster. Confronting those in control of the destructive forms of industrial fishing underlying the current global fisheries crisis demands firm solidarity between fish harvesters and fish workers of the north and the south. We can only hope and work towards an eventual re-unification of the parties who met at Delhi in 1997. When that time comes, it behoves us to construct a more durable basis for collaboration. Perhaps the ideas of strategic simplifications and partial connections might furnish some of the inspiration for that effort.

Notes

[1] I am grateful to the International Development Research Centre for funding my doctoral research. I would also like to acknowledge the influence of Dr. Marta Rohatynskyj in helping me conceptualise the framework for this paper. Dr. John Kurien and Dr. Jojada Verrips also provided constructive feedback. Responsibility for the arguments made in this paper rests solely with me.

[2] The Canadian Maritimes comprises the three Atlantic Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

[3] The ongoing adaptation of human action to changing circumstance is captured well by James Scott in his discussion of his concept of metis (Scott 1998:ch.9).

[4] The danger of giving in fully to a post-modern epistemology when considering social life is the loss of the ability to make simplifying claims. I do not go so far but rather join those (e.g. Sarkar 1997; Marcus 1999) who recognize the critical potential of a self-reflexive post-modernism while still believing in the necessity of taking positions. One reason for doing so is that humans clearly have the capacity to act and survive even if according to understandings that are patently socially constructed (Taussig 1993:xv).

[5] For the purposes of this paper, I employ the terms essentialisation and simplification as synonyms.

[6] There are also certain material ecosystemic changes that have occurred in many parts of the world such as the trend to fishing down food webs, which are associated with increased fishing capacity (Pauly, Christensen *et al*. 1998).

[7] There is not space here to elaborate on the argument that I have developed to justify the inter-connection of these key aspects of social and ecological change in the Gujarat fishery. The fullest expression of my constructed history of the Gujarat fishery is in Johnson (Johnson 2002) but is also introduced in a preliminary way in Johnson (Johnson 2000) and (Johnson 2001).

[8] John Kurien, personal communication, September 2001.

[9] Each category, on close inspection, contains elements that challenge the image of the whole and link them to the contrasting category. The definition of professional that the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters puts forward is one of fishers who are 'given control over the setting of standards for training in the areas of conservation and responsible fishing practices' (Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters 1997). By this definition, the CCPFH is equating professional with increased management responsibility, a contention equally acceptable to artisanal fishers. By the same token, should we consider the small Kattumaram fishers of Kerala artisanal when they employ ring seine nets that are highly destructive?

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Book Review

CHARLES, A. *Sustainable Fishery Systems*. Oxford: Blackwell Science, 2001. 370 pp.

Tony Charles, professor of management science and environmental studies in St. Mary's University, Canada, has long been associated with fisheries and is a respected author in the field. His ambitions in this full-length volume are far-reaching: a comprehensive state-of-the-art survey, bringing together insights from marine biology as well as from the social sciences. His intended audience is broad too, ranging from college students to practitioners and fellow academics. Written in an easy, accessible style, *Sustainable Fishery Systems* provides an ideal introduction to the field.

Part I is devoted to an analysis of what Charles calls the fishery system – a common enough concept in fishery science. However, he defines this system differently than most fishery scientists do, and it is worthwhile to pause for a moment to consider his approach. Marine biologists still tend to conflate a fishery system with an ecosystem, viewing the act of fishing as an (often negative) external influence. Similarly, fishery economists, sociologists, and anthropologists regard fisheries primarily as economic or sociocultural phenomena, bringing in biological insights and conditions from the wings. Despite the fact that fishery scientists, for many years now, remain convinced that human and natural aspects should be taken together – and are making efforts in this direction – Charles is the first author, to my knowledge, to assimilate the various disciplinary viewpoints into a single, balanced conceptual framework. For him, a fishery system thus consists of three equal and interconnected parts: the natural system (including the fish, the ecosystem and the biophysical environment); the human system (with fishers, processors, traders and consumers) and the fishery management system (including planners, scientists, and politicians).

Part I of the book describes the structure and dynamics of fishery systems as they are found in various parts of the world. For although Charles is most knowledgeable about northern fisheries, and the Canadian situation in particular, his argument is global in nature and pertains to the south as well. Chapter 1 introduces the concept of fishery systems, and presents a typology of systems according to scale. The eight chapters that follow discuss aspects of the three sub-systems mentioned above, with special attention dedicated to contemporary management practice. The latter is seen as four components – strategic management, tactical and operational management, measures toward fishery development, and fishery research – with a chapter devoted to each component. The last substantive chapter in Part I looks into the most intractable aspect of fishing systems – the one dimension that has frustrated well-meaning management efforts time and time again – that is, the *dynamics* of fish and their reproduction, fishing fleets and fishing communities, and the management system itself.

In Part II, the perspective changes, shifting from descriptions about contemporary fishery systems and how they work, to prescriptions about how they ought to operate. The catchword here is *sustainability*, which Charles links to resiliency, the ability of a fishery to absorb and 'bounce back' from natural and human disturbances. In line with his concern for a broadly defined fishery system, Charles distinguishes four dimensions of sustainability – ecological, socioeconomic, community, and institutional sustainability – and then argues (p. 190) that 'overall sustainability of the fishery system can be seen to require simultaneous achievement of all four components'. I will return to this issue below.

The remainder of Part II discusses major approaches to fisheries management as marine biologists, social scientists, and managers alike presently promote them. These include the precautionary approach, the ecosystem approach, co-management, and the rights-based approach. In the final chapter, Charles gathers together the various strands of the book and declares his own management priorities. These are embodied in the concept of *robust management,* a management approach that seeks to avoid the pitfalls associated with illusions of certainty and controllability and instead promotes flexibility and adaptiveness.

For those who have followed academic and policymaking discussions in this particular field, Charles summarizes the contemporary state of knowledge, but presents little that is new. At the same time, he impresses the reader with his understanding of what is happening in the faraway corners of fishery science, offering remedial teaching to those of us who have been less than holistically trained. *Sustainable Fishery Systems* is in many ways a rich book.

In its broad scope and ambition too, lie important weaknesses, however. The most straightforward criticisms are those levelled by specialists who argue that important disciplinary aspects have been overlooked, misunderstood, or shortchanged. For social scientists, for example, it is clear that Charles does not achieve sufficient depth in analysing the human dimensions of fisheries. The gaps in the reference list serve to point out the limitations of Charles's reading in this field; there is, for example, no mention of eminent anthropologists and historians such as Raymond Firth, Paul Alexander, Gísli Pálsson, or Arthur McEvoy, to mention only a few. In principle these weaknesses, however, are capable of redressing.

The same might be said of Charles's view of management as a rational and impartial process, in which governments weigh objectives and instruments and calculate which stakeholder is to be involved, when, how, and where. Such an approach tends to neglect the fact that in many countries, particularly in the south, the state lacks strength and purpose, and 'money power' holds sway. And while Charles does mention, for example, that 'particularly in poorer developing nations, […] the good intentions inherent in fishery legislation can be thwarted by a lack of policy attention to (or financial capability for) enforcement of that legislation' (p. 92), he does not reason the consequences of this situation through to his planning model.

This brings me to the fundamental problem of the book; that is, the idea of fisheries as one large integrated *system*. The problem with a systems approach is that it tends to be functionalist in nature; each part is thought to link up to and play a role in relation to other parts. As social scientists will testify, however, this viewpoint is extremely problematic if applied to society. Society is diverse and dynamic, consisting of changing social constellations with their own trajectories, and no sector, including fisheries, can be viewed as separate from the rest. Although fisher societies adapt themselves to the possibilities afforded by the marine resource, their choices and lifestyles have other sources of inspiration as well.

The precariousness of Charles's position comes to the fore most prominently in his discussion of sustainability, with its four dimensions, of which three are arguably human in nature. In chapter 10, Charles proposes a framework for sustainability assessment in which the nature and extent of sustainability in a given fishery system is evaluated, both qualitatively and quantitatively. In the following pages he suggests sustainability checklists, indicators, and indices for all four dimensions. The checklist (p. 193) thus includes questions like: 'will the activity increase the aggregate long-term rate of employment?' and 'is the project likely to maintain or increase the long-term stability of affected communities?'

These are relevant issues, to be sure, and Charles is to be commended for his attempt to integrate them more fully in the policymaking process. I wonder, however, whether his

framework, which connects everything to the concept of sustainability, is the most practicable way forward. The crucial question that arises is this: sustainable in relation to what? In fisheries, the term sustainability has gained most clarity where it concerns the relationship between harvesting activity and so-called ecological carrying capacity. But how can we measure sustainability of a socioeconomic system or of communities? Is their sustainability a function of their contribution to ecological sustainability? Or does one apply other indices, such as economic performance, or social justice? Finally, if the indices are indeed different, does it make sense to cluster everything under the same concept? I think not. Charles does not address these issues clearly or directly, and in fact, seems to vacillate back and forth between different positions. This leaves our understanding of a fishery system, as it *should be*, hanging in the breeze.

These shortcomings detract little from my general appreciation of the book, however. I highly recommend it for those entering and working in the fishery field.

Maarten Bavinck

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