

Insidious Rationalities

The Institutionalisation of Small Boat Fishing and the Rise of the Rapacious Fisher

Anthony Davis

St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish

ABSTRACT This essay contends that the Atlantic Canadian small boat fishery is being systematically dehumanised as the socio-economic and organisational conditions in which fishers work become ruled by capitalist-industrial formal institutions and their rationalities. More specifically, small boat fishers, largely participating in an owner/operator and small community referenced fishery, are driven from deeply rooted attachments and *modus operandi* articulated in familial and familiar social conditions to sharp-edged, self-interested utilitarian rationalities as their livelihoods become dependent upon and expressive of the imperatives and logic of capitalist-industrial formal institutions such as government and board-based representative organisations. Canadian federal government management interventions, the rise of representative organisations, and small fisher responses are examined through social historical and case study means for the purposes of investigating this contention and illustrating key moments in the process.

Introduction

The Atlantic Canadian fisheries are currently in the convulsions of yet another socio-economic crisis. While not the only factor, tremendous expansions in the capacity to catch and process marine resources, particularly since the declaration of the 200 mile economic management zone, have precipitated over-exploitation of resources and, possibly, ecological/environmental damage resulting in dramatic declines in groundfish stocks. This situation has left many small boat as well as industrial-scale fishers and fish companies without access to sufficient resources. Consequently, boats and plants now lie idle for lengthy portions of the year, and increasing numbers of catching and processing operators throughout Atlantic Canada are finding themselves unable to continue in the industry. As possessors of technologically sophisticated, specialised fishing capacity and its accompanying debt, numerous small boat owners face the prospects of either marginal incomes or creditor repossession since buyers for idled vessels and fishing licenses are few and far between. Many fisheries dependent communities are experiencing unemployment levels of such magnitude that their future as anything more than retirement villages is being placed in jeopardy (Department of Fisheries and Oceans 1989).

It is my contention that this crisis has been facilitated and expedited by transformations in the small boat sector, wherein owner/operators have undertaken the widespread adoption of industrial fishing practices and their

associated organisational forms and world views. In essence, the brand of utilitarian rationality particular to industrial capitalist market systems has been woven systematically into the socio-economic fabric of the Atlantic Canadian small boat fishery and its communities.

While always thoroughly integrated in the capitalist industrial market and class systems at the level of exchange, small boat fishers mainly engaged in fishing for their livelihoods rather than to accumulate capital. That is, the vast majority fished in order to satisfy their material and social requirements. Moreover, they recognised and expressed, in their behaviour more so than in their words, the necessity to fish in a manner which did not jeopardise the livelihoods of others and which did not inhibit access to livelihood for others. Equipped with more or less the same technical ability and know-how, socio-economic distinctions between small boat fishers within harbours arose situationally rather than substantively, expressing differences in factors such as work motivation, luck and risk taking. Rarely would such distinctions be derived from circumstances that violated the livelihood interests of others. Moreover, their sense of collective interest and collective destiny construed the small boat fishers' approach to and organisation of fishing. It also influenced within harbour fisher relations as well as the broader fishing communities' social dynamics (Acheson 1981; Andersen 1979; Davis 1984; McCay and Acheson 1987; and Pinkerton 1989).

The last twenty years in particular have seen considerable pressure brought to bear on these localised practices and norms. Federal and provincial government fisheries management and industrial development policies, changes in industry structure such as the movement away from salt fish and towards fresh and fresh-frozen fillets, and the thorough immersion of rural coastal communities in urban-referenced ideology through vehicles such as consolidated schooling and mass media are among the key vehicles that have facilitated the ascendancy of competitive utilitarian rationality among fishers and in coastal communities. Competitive utilitarian rationality has become predominant in fisher decisions to invest in expanded capacity and to specialise in mass harvesting approaches to resource exploitation, thereby, expediting intra-occupational and intra-community differentiation and the current resource crisis (Davis 1991; Environment Canada 1976; Government of Canada 1983; Department of Fisheries and Oceans 1989; Sinclair 1983; 1985; and Thiessen and Davis 1988).¹

In order to develop the argument this essay opens with a brief presentation of recent developments concerning the professionalisation and institutionalisation of small boat fishing. Here an emphasis is placed on fisher-government relations. This is followed by a presentation and analysis of some interview data concerning membership opinions, attitudes and attachments to an independent small boat fisher co-operative in Eastern Nova Scotia. These data are employed to illustrate the character and expression among many small boat fishers of competitive utilitarian rationality. These data are also employed to suggest avenues of interpretation regarding the characteristics of

response associated with whether or not co-op members also belong to a fishers' trade union.

Professionalising Small Boat Fishers

Notably, the rise of competitive utilitarian rationality among small boat fishers is coupled with the push to professionalise small boat fishing. In Canada, national surveys over the last three decades concerning the socio-economic status of occupations have reported fishing consistently in the bottom quarter of the occupational status system (Pineo and Porter 1967; Pineo, Porter and McRoberts 1977; and Blishen, Carroll and Moore 1987). Low in status, fishing and fish processing occupations are thought of as minimal skill pursuits, jobs done in the main by persons with a poor formal education and few alternatives. In short, these are viewed as occupations of last resort.

While some of these perceptions persist, considerable resources have been directed toward 'professionalising' fishing occupations, especially fishing itself. For instance, achievement of 'professional status' by fishers was identified as one of the key strategies in the new fisheries management policy proposed in 1976 (Environment Canada 1976:66). In large measure, professionalisation of fishing has been an objective of federal government development policy predicated on the notion that the small boat fishery must be made economically effective.

The effective matching of fishing effort to the resource ... require[s] a fair and practical means to distinguish the professional fisherman from the casual participant that is, to differentiate between the full-timer and the part-timer ... the fishery cannot possibly support all those who now claim to be fishermen (Government of Canada 1983:215).

Economic sensibility, in turn, is taken to mean consistent in organisation and performance with industrial capitalist market-driven dynamics. That is, small boat fishers would become professional once their livelihoods were derived from an organisation of production and occupational relations embodying a small business *ethos* as well as the efficiencies of economic competition.

To this end, the federal and provincial governments initiated training programmes, beginning in the mid-seventies, in areas such as accountancy, small business operations, and taxation/fiscal planning. These courses were designed for delivery within coastal communities during the winter months. While providing useful information, these programmes were also intended to seed and nurture the *ethos* of approaching fishing as a small business enterprise rather than simply as a way to make a living (Government of Nova Scotia 1972-85). Inherent in the new *ethos* was the rationality of competitive utilitarian individualism, the presumption that business enterprises are necessarily locked in competition with each other in their pursuit of scarce economically valuable goods; the idea that success is measured by the ability

of individual enterprises to maximise their portion of available wealth; the notion that future economic success in the fishery is contingent upon the ability of fishers to approach their occupation as professional small business operators.

Wedded to this ethos embodied in the government industrial development policy were measures prescribing access participation in regulation and in management. For instance, throughout the late sixties and seventies various government-fisher committees were required by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) to recommend terms and conditions of fisher access and participation. Out of these meetings came the bonafide fisher designation, reserving primary access to participants who derived a substantial portion of their yearly income from fishing. These were to be considered the professional small boat fishers. Part-time, seasonal participants in specific fisheries such as lobster fishing were at first systematically constrained through special regulations prescribing the amount of gear they were permitted to deploy. Eventually, many part-timers were eliminated as the DFO refused to issue the necessary licenses to those without bonafide status (Davis and Thiessen 1988; and MacDonald 1984).

Of singular importance in this illustration is the setting within which the new policy decisions and recommendations were developed. Basically, it entailed a DFO constituted formal committee composed of fishers from various sectors, DFO policy and science officials, and others of expert and vested interest status including representatives of fishers' organisations such as co-operatives, associations and unions. These committees have since evolved into various management consultative mechanisms fully incorporated within the DFO and its policy formation and implementation processes (Department of Fisheries and Oceans 1985, 1988, 1989). Of course, fisher participation in the committees was and remains legitimatised by the assumption that these bodies constitute the basis whereby DFO consults directly with industry professionals before designing and implementing policy. As a stage in professionalising the occupation of commercial fishing, these committees formalise consultative processes and dynamics within institutional settings invented for this purpose, institutional settings foreign to most small boat fishers and their communities.

Moreover, representation in these institutional settings remains contingent upon bonafide fishers nominating or electing peers from among categories of participants largely specified by DFO, categories which largely reflect geographical location and sector participation, that is, the type of fishing gear used in conjunction with locational factors (e.g., inshore, midshore and offshore) and business characteristics (e.g., corporation, independent fisher). Sector representation was, from the outset, designated as a key element of fisher participation in the consultative process. From the DFO point of view, the industry is comprised of different groups defined by differences in technology and scale that compete for the resource and that are, as a result, often in conflict with one and another. This approach represented a large step in the

direction of legitimising and concretising sector divisions, beside the existing differences between livelihood and accumulation approaches, as 'real' organisational elements in the fishery. Moreover, in addition to being legitimised and concretised within the formal institutional setting, sector divisions have become definitive frames of reference and now underlie fishers' categorical thinking about their industry. Now, not only is the participant a bonafide fisher, he/she is also a bonafide, professional longline, gill net, lobster, drag net, crab or scallop fisher. These developments further facilitate fundamental transformations in the world view, behaviour and social organization of small boat fishers, transformations signifying the ascendancy of a competitive utilitarian rationality (MacInnes and Davis 1991).

The determination of representation on consultative committees, not to mention order among participants in the industry, provided impetus for federal and provincial government fisheries departments to encourage independent small boat fishers to form organisations through which they could pursue their interests and assure themselves a voice at government-industry councils. Throughout the seventies and eighties numerous organisations have arisen which purport to represent a body of independent small boat fishers. While most of these are associations organised along either geographical and/or sector participation lines (e.g., The Eastern Fishermen's Association, the Cape Breton Island Fishermen's Association, the Southwest Nova Scotia Inshore Longliner's Association and the like), several trade unions, particularly the Maritime Fishermen's Union (MFU) and The Canadian Automobile Workers Union (CAW), have had notable success in presenting themselves as representative voices (Clement 1986). The MFU, an organisation which arose during the mid-seventies from the struggles of Northeast New Brunswick Acadian small boat fishers, styles itself as concerned exclusively with organising Maritime small boat fishers in order that they have effective leverage in shaping economic and occupational futures (Theriault and Williams 1986). Regardless of the organisational form of preference, the DFO insisted that fisher participation on its consultative bodies be representative, whether derived from special pan-fisher elections or interest group formations. Either way, the voices of small boat fishers had to be derived from formal organisational contexts and institutionalised processes, the only references and processes sensible to the DFO and other governmental-industry agencies. Indeed, the ability of small boat fishers to form themselves into such organisations was considered indicative of the extent to which participants had matured as professional, independent business operators. After all, to be professional is to recognise that your particular interests, within the crucible of industrial capitalist dynamics, are furthered by working through institutions that provide voice which is especially necessary when other participants in the fishery are seen as competitive and antithetical to one's own particular goals.

Central to the professionalisation and institutionalisation of small boat fishers are the government access and resource management initiatives, such

as limited entry licensing and quota allocations. Stock collapses in the late 1960s and early 1970s created an industry crisis which compelled government to de-emphasise industrial development and focus upon the creation of stock and access management strategies. For the first time, the central problem of the industry was redefined as too much capacity uncontrollably pursuing too few fish. Consequently, the federal government developed policies intended to constrain fishing effort to within the biological capacity of the stocks to bear specific rates of exploitation.

Replacing the view that argued for the necessity to modernise through the adoption of new and better technologies was a biologically-grounded perspective that insisted the industry had too many fishermen pursuing too few fish. The solution for this problem was believed to reside in the development of a more refined, sophisticated and comprehensive management regime that would limit access to marine resources through mechanisms such as licenses and quotas. With this change came a much greater emphasis by government on 'policing' fish catching and processing activities in order to assure compliance with the regulations.

By the late seventies, commitment to this approach of fisheries management had become thoroughly entrenched. Now the thrust of government policy was to regulate precisely the exploitative effort directed at marine resources by making participation in the specific fisheries with particular technologies contingent upon the annual provision of governmentally issued licenses. Entry into fisheries such as scallop, lobster, shrimp, and snow crab, as well as those employing mobile gears (seine and drag nets), is only possible today after obtaining the necessary government issued limited entry permits which are commonly purchased from retiring fishermen for tens of thousands of dollars (Department of Fisheries and Oceans 1989; MacDonald 1984). Added to the capital cost for a boat and fishing equipment, this licence 'investment' assures that new entrants begin with a debt load that can only be serviced through high volume catches and heavy exploitative pressure on ocean resources and environments. Indeed, a fishing strategy solely expressing the individual needs and goals of the captain/owner, over all other concerns, must come to the fore in a set of circumstances shaped by debt servicing pressures. After all, it is the individual captain/owner who is professionalised, who benefits from and is targeted in government management and development programmes, and who must satisfy livelihood needs and enterprise costs. In short, government management and development policy assures that the self-interested harvester upon which the policy is predicated comes to dominate the socio-economic profile of the fishery, thereby creating fishers as pirates (Davis 1991; Davis and Thiessen 1988; and Sinclair 1983).

Of course, many fishers, especially those middle-aged and younger, have done little to resist and much to accelerate the industrialisation/professionalisation process. As they have entered the fisheries as captains and owners, these participants have demanded the latest and the best in boats, engines, electronics and equipment. Fueled by promises of endless prosperity following

the declaration of the 200 mile zone and buoyed by access to 'cheap' (low interest) money through provincial loan boards, many fishers have displayed an almost insatiable appetite for new capacity throughout the late seventies and early eighties. Thus, by the time caps were slammed into place in the mid-1990s the new fishing capacity and the debts it represented were in place and fishing, fishing at a pace and with an avarice previously unseen in the Atlantic Canadian small boat fisheries (Davis and Kasdan 1984). Competitive utilitarian rationality was well seeded and nurtured by these developments, developments that have placed the concerns and interests of individual small boat captain/owners front and centre in industry dynamics.

Government management programmes, particularly limited entry licensing, are imposing rules governing access and participation without regard for local-level conditions and practices. In the process, these initiatives are fundamentally altering the social topography of the fishing occupation. First and foremost in this process is the impact of government management programmes upon the social organisation of community- and familial-based fisheries.

In such fisheries key aspects of the decision-making processes are governed by an informal, locally-specific, system of rules worked out by the generations of fishers who have exploited ocean resources from particular harbours. These rules affect numerous areas of fishing activity. In many instances they define the boundaries of harbour-specific fishing grounds. In addition, these rules regulate certain aspects of exploitative behaviour. For instance, they specify the types of fishing gear permissible (e.g., hook and line as opposed to drag net or large mesh gill nets). Often these rules stipulate who can fish the ground (the persons from 'our' harbour). They also spell out expected behaviour, e.g., you don't sell 'tinkers' (undersized lobsters), you don't touch another person's gear, and you don't interfere intentionally with another person's gear (i.e., set lines or traps on top of someone else's, drag a net through set gear, and so on).

Persons who persistently transgress the rules suffer consequences ranging from verbal warnings, through tit-for-tat reprisals, to outright destruction of their capacity to fish. Regardless of reputation, economic worth or other measures of occupational success, individuals are expected to reflect in their words and deeds respect for these experientially-based and consensually-derived, local-level procedures. In effect, the rules constitute a fisher-generated access and use management system. As with the most management systems, this one constrains the expression of individualism by attaching conditions to participation, conditions which define the points at which 'rugged individualism' is subordinated to collective interest. This is particularly the case when the actions of individuals jeopardise the ability of other fishers to make their living from fishing (McCay and Acheson 1987; Pinkerton 1989).

Limited entry licensing and other management programmes focus on controlling individual enterprises and their owners. This frame of reference is

entirely different from and at odds with the familial/community context prevalent among fishing people. The definition and allocation of access and participation resources in terms of individual participants and enterprises is contrary to occupational and community-based solidarities and regulatory regimes. The local-level, community-based social framework exercises a diminishing influence in terms of construing participation. The key now is for each individual to obtain the necessary permits and resources. Local interpersonal relations among peers have become irrelevant to whether or not a person obtains desired resources from government dispensaries. Now the social field is institutional, and bureaucratic, largely the antithesis of the familial and communal-based essence of the livelihood fishery. Success in this field of action demands skills and points of reference substantially different than those associated with getting along in the pre-government access management era.

The successful fishers are increasingly those adept at pursuing personal objectives through bureaucratic systems. An individualised point of reference is now taking precedence over the community basis of occupational solidarity. That is, with economic and occupational outcomes becoming contingent upon access to state-controlled resources, fishers are adopting strategies that are necessarily self-focused an orientation which policy makers always assumed was an inherent feature of these rugged individuals. In short, government management policies, which were predicated on the premise that fishers were irresponsible self-seekers and, thus, prone to over exploit ocean resources, have created the very conditions necessary to fulfil their prophecy. With the basis of occupational and community solidarities becoming irrelevant to economic outcomes, fishers, as professionalised and institutionally referenced individuals, increasingly look to government agents for resources, participatory licenses and problem solving.

The specific quality and character of the presence of these processes is underlined in the brief discussion and analysis of the attitudes, opinions and attachments of fisher members concerning their independent fisheries co-operative.

An Illustrative Case

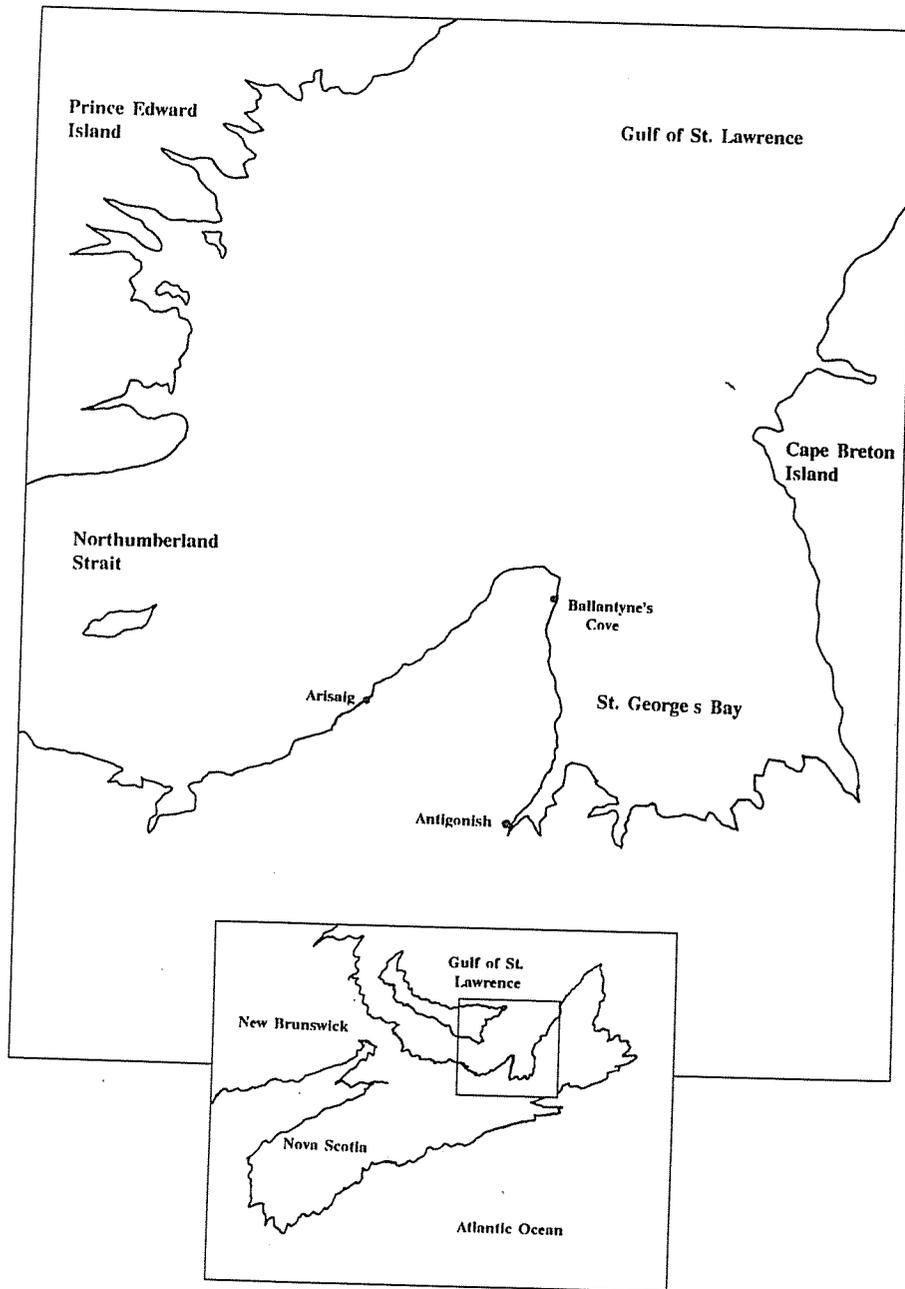
A study of membership attachment to and participation in an independent Eastern Nova Scotian small boat fisheries co-operative was conducted during the summer of 1988. The extent to which the Co-operative's membership is affiliated with the Maritime Fishermen's Union (MFU) was documented through the course of interviews. For the purposes of illustrating competitive utilitarian rationality and its institutionalisation within the small boat fishing sector, the data discussed below contrasts the attitudes, opinions, and involvements of union affiliated co-op members with those of the unaffiliated membership. The assumptions guiding this exercise are, first, that union-affiliated members are more likely to be involved in and supportive of formal

institutional mechanisms than are non-affiliated co-op members. Second, union-affiliated co-op members are more likely than unaffiliated members to consider formal institutions as necessary to representation and as appropriate vehicles for their specific individual economic interests.

The North Bay Fishermen's Co-operative (N.B.F.C.) arose in the early 1980s from the ashes of the Ballantyne's Cove, Antigonish County, Nova Scotia branch of the United Maritime Fishermen's Co-operative. Co-operative forms of organisation have a long history in this area, one which begins with the Antigonish Movement during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Coastal communities along the shores of St. Georges Bay and Northumberland Strait were among the early participants in the Antigonish Movement, a social movement which stressed self-help and co-operative organisation and which was initiated by several Catholic priests based in the St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department.

The St. Georges Co-operative based in Ballantyne's Cove was begun within this context. By the early 1950s, the fish processing and lobster marketing segment of its business were transferred to a county-wide fishers co-operative, the Antigonish Fisheries Co-op (A.F.C.). This, in turn, affiliated with the United Maritime Fishermen Co-operative (U.M.F.), an umbrella organisation developed as a vehicle within and through which local producer fishing co-operatives could concentrate their marketing and economic interests. However, once the A.F.C./U.M.F. business relationship failed, owner/operators in the St. George's Bay area formed the N.B.F.C. This co-operative purchased the A.F.C./U.M.F. office and processing facilities at Ballantyne's Cove. Since its inception in 1983, the N.B.F.C. has developed new facilities and aggressively pursued market opportunities. At the time the study reported herein was being constructed, the N.B.F.C. had sixty-one members fishing out of a number of ports, the major ones being Cribbon's Point, Ballantyne's Cove and Araisag/Lismore.

Fifty-one of the sixty-one members participated in the study. Of these members, thirty-one (60.8%) reported that they also belonged to the Maritime Fishermen's Union (M.F.U.). The remaining twenty members did not report any organisational affiliations other than the co-op. Notably, the M.F.U. fishers are, on average, younger (74.2% forty-five years of age or younger) and the possessors of more formal education (55.8% with vocational or university training) than co-op members who do not belong to the M.F.U. (50.0% are over forty-five years of age, while 40.0% have vocational school or university training). The trends in these data predict that M.F.U. co-op members are more likely than unaffiliated co-op members to have undergone capitalist industrial enculturation of the sort which both seeds and nurtures competitive utilitarian rationality such as has been documented to be elemental in formal schooling and exposure to mass media.



Map 1. Ballantyne's Cove and Environs.

Co-operative Attachments?

Table 1 provides a comparative profile of union and non-union co-op members' opinions, attitudes, and involvements concerning the fisheries co-operative. As indicated in the table, union-affiliated members are much more likely than unaffiliated members to attend co-op meetings (80.6% versus 40.0% respectively) and to hold official positions within the co-operative (41.9% versus 20.0%). Union members are also much more oriented than unaffiliated members towards participation in formal organisations. Of course, their membership in the union in addition to co-operative membership is testament to this.

While around two in every three of both the union and non-union members think that the co-operative *represents* their needs and concerns, three in every four non-union members, but only a little more than one in three union members, claim that the co-operative is *satisfying* their needs and concerns. One interpretation of this difference is that union members, having closer affiliation with institutional vehicles for pursuit of their interests, have more specific and demanding expectations of institutional performance than do unaffiliated members. Ironically a much larger proportion of non-union than union members report feeling that they are neither consulted enough about the co-operative's plans and initiatives (85% as compared with 45.2%), nor kept

Table 1. Comparative Profile of Union and Non-Union Members for Selected Categories of Opinions, Attitude and Involvement Concerning the Co-operative.

Categories	Membership			
	MFU Members (N = 31)		Non-MFU Members (N = 20)	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Attend Meetings	80.6	19.4	40.0	60.0
Held Official Position in Co-op	41.9	58.1	20.0	80.0
Co-op <i>Represents</i> Needs and Concerns	67.7	32.3	60.0	40.0
Co-op <i>Satisfying</i> ** Needs and Concerns	35.5	64.5	75.0	25.0
Members Consulted Enough*** About Plans and Initiatives	45.2	54.8	15.0	85.0
Members Kept Adequately Informed*	62.0	35.5	15.0	85.0
Would Sell to Other Fish Buyers	29.0	71.0	45.0	55.0
Members Should be Required to Give Time to the Co-op	64.5	35.5	50.0	50.0

T test results

- * .001
- ** .01
- *** .05

adequately informed (85.0% as contrasted with 62.0%). Union members greater tendency to attend meetings and hold official positions no doubt positively influences their assessment of whether or not they are consulted and informed sufficiently. Active participation also explains, in part, union membership dissatisfaction with the co-operative's attention to their needs and concerns. Knowledge of the particulars concerning plans and activities allows union members to contrast the co-operative's performance and intentions with their particular expectations. Conversely, non-union members, while largely unsatisfied with the extent to which they feel that they are kept informed and consulted about plans and initiatives, have lower and more immediate expectations than union members regarding the co-operative, especially expectations which are being satisfied through sale of their catches at acceptable prices.

Notably, on the question measuring satisfaction with selling their landings to the co-operative, greater numbers of non-union than union members indicate ambivalence. For instance, in response to the question 'If another fish buyer were to set up here offering higher fish and lobster prices, would you sell to them?', almost one in two non-union members indicate that they would, while less than one in three union members were so disposed. Furthermore, fully 93.5% of union affiliated members claim they are satisfied with selling to the co-operative as contrasted with 65.0% of the non-union members (cf. Table 1 and 2). Again the union affiliated co-op members, when compared with non-union members, indicate a much stronger attachment and loyalty to formal institutions as vehicles necessary to furthering their specific interests, even while registering significant dissatisfaction with co-operative performance in regard to their needs and concerns.

This interpretation is further reinforced by members responses to questions concerning the extent to which they are prepared to trust the co-operative's management and to sublimate individual interests to institutionally situated prerogatives. For example, almost one in three of the union affiliated members agreed that the co-operative's management knew what was best in terms of financial matters. Not one of the non-union members agreed with this statement. Over two in three union members indicate satisfaction with the co-operative's management, while less than one in two non-union members are so disposed. While less than ten per cent of both union and non-union members indicated they would transfer a fishing license to another co-op member, surrender a license, or reduce their fishing capacity if these steps were judged by the membership to be in the interests of the co-operative, almost two in three union members, as contrasted with less than one in three non-union members, would agree to reduce their fishing effort. Moreover, almost one in three union members claimed that they would allow the co-operative to hold and distribute fishing licenses and fishing quotas. Contrarily, little more than one in ten non-union members were disposed favourably to this scenario. In short, few of the non-union co-op members indicate that they are prepared to invest in or entrust their self-interests to the

co-operative, especially its decision-making and judgement dynamics. In contrast, many union-affiliated members indicate that they are prepared to do this.

While it could be argued that these data indicate non-union members are more individualistic than their union counterparts, virtually identical negative responses to the scenario of surrendering licenses and reducing fishing capacity suggests a different interpretation. Both union and non-union co-op members are adamantly protective of their individual prerogatives, particularly as these regard government regulated access to and participation in fishing. But, there is a fundamental difference in the rationality of the individualism evident in their orientations. On the one hand, the rationality of the non-union co-op members' individualism expresses the notion of untrammelled independence, a world view in which sublimation to institutional/formal organisational dynamics contradicts, erodes, and fetters independence. With this category of membership, the co-op is not to be trusted beyond its role to address immediate needs and concerns. Certainly, these

Table 2. Comparative Profile of Union and Non-Union Members for Selected Categories of Opinions, Attitude and Involvement Concerning the Cooperative.

Categories	Membership			
	MFU Members (N = 31)		Non-MFU Members (N = 20)	
	Yes %	No %	Yes %	No %
Management Knows Best	29.0	71.0	—	100.0
Satisfied with Co-op Management	67.7	32.3	45.0	55.0
Satisfied with Performance** of Federal Officials	22.6	77.4	60.0	40.0
Satisfied with Performance of Provincial Officials	46.7	53.3	68.4	31.6
Satisfied with Selling** to the Co-op	93.5	6.5	65.0	35.0
Would Reduce Fishing Effort*** if in Interests of the Co-op	64.5	35.9	31.6	68.4
Would Allow the Co-op to Distribute Licences/Quota	29.0	71.0	10.5	89.5
Would Advise a Young Person to Enter the Fishery	61.3	38.7	45.0	55.0
Would Advise Any Children to Enter the Fishery	64.5	35.5	55.0	45.0
T test results				
•	.001			
••	.01			
•••	.05			

fishers, by and large, do not consider the co-operative as an appropriate site for working out key livelihood decisions and dynamics such as conditions regulating access and participation.

On the other hand, union-affiliated members are, by and large, likely to consider the co-operative to be both a *necessary* and an *appropriate* instrument through which they can further their individual interests. That is, instead of a suspicious, arms-length instrumental relation with formal organisations, the union fishers' rationality connects and situates individual interests to institutional/organisational settings and dynamics. In this view, institutions are vehicles through which individual interests and utilities can be furthered rather than impeded.

In order to examine the possibility that the more institutionally oriented union members simply express in their opinions, attitudes and attachments, a collectivist, union-consciousness concerning what is in their best interests, responses to questions regarding the acceptability of extending membership in the co-operative to persons other than fishers were examined. These data are presented in Table 3.

The notable quality of the response distributions is that, basically, there is not any meaningful differences in the attitudes of union-affiliated and non-union co-op members. If anything, union members are slightly less inclined than non-union members to extend membership to fishing crews and co-op wage workers. Certainly the lack of significant distinctions evident in these responses confirms that for most union members attachment to the co-op has little to do with collectivist, proletarian consciousness and its associated rationalities, forms of consciousness often argued as elemental to union formation (Clement 1986). Indeed, membership in both the union and co-operative organisations reflects a conviction, regardless of whether this is known to the fishers or not, that formal institutions are essential for furthering individual interests. These are small boat fishers for whom, unlike their rugged, independent individualist peers, institutional references, settings

Table 3. Comparative Profile of Union and Non-Union Member Responses to the Idea of Opening Co-op Membership to Selected Categories of Persons.

Categories	Membership			
	MFU Members (N = 31)		Non-MFU Members (N = 20)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
	%	%	%	%
Membership to Fishing Crew	32.3	67.7	40.0	60.0
Membership to Office Staff and Plant Workers	32.3	67.7	40.0	60.0
Membership to Co-op Management	41.9	58.1	40.0	60.0

and dynamics are expected and accepted vehicles within which individual utilities are expressed and pursued. In short, the union co-op members are much more 'organisation persons' than are the non-union members, meaning that union members associate, in an elemental way, sensibility, activity, pursuit of interests, livelihood orientation and the like with institutional, not independent, settings.

The patterns in the findings reported here clearly differentiate institutionally referenced small boat fishing captains from the more stereotypically rugged, independent individualist, types. Given the character and content of small boat fishers' professionalisation coupled with the consequences of holding licenses and possessing industrialised fishing technologies, institutional references for the elemental furtherance of self-interest reveals that the competitive- individualistic rationality has become well-entrenched, especially among the younger and better-educated fishers. These fishers, like many others throughout Atlantic Canada, have formed a vested interest in formal institutionalised organisations and processes. Unlike their forebearers, these organisational forms and processes are fundamentally believed to be necessary to, not the antithesis of, present day prosperity, future success and the maintenance of independence. In all, this denotes a remarkable, though predictable, transition in small boat fisher rationality.

Conclusions

Social science has long recognised the process and transformational consequences of industrial, capitalist institutionalisation. Beginning with Weber, the incorporation of the human into an organisational matrix dominated by the formal institutions of industrial capitalism has been recognised as providing a mixed blessing for the human condition (Gerth and Mills 1946:212 ff.). On the one hand, this institutional form unlocks individual potentials from subjective and local fetters while creating possibilities for the generation and distribution of new wealth. On the other hand, industrial capitalist institutions dehumanise people by subjecting them to the rationalities of objectified economic calculation. The worth of humans becomes reduced to elements such as formal credentials, consumption patterns, income, and mobility within a market referenced economic rationality. At the same time, industrial institutions are bureaucratic and autocratic. They compel compliance and conformity to institutional objectives rather than to the intimacies of family, familiars, kin and community. In so doing, bureaucratic institutions dehumanise livelihoods and human relations.

Although simply put, this sketch draws into focus qualities of the professionalisation/institutionalisation processes. 'Professionalising' small boat fishers, especially those in the advantaged positions as vessel owners, license holders and/or quota controllers, is an intimate quality of institutionalisation. In turn, institutionalisation embeds the rationality of individual self-interest in and among advantaged fishers. Their socio-economic situation

becomes referenced by and dependent upon relations with bureaucracies rather than upon face-to-face relations with their family, friends, kin and community.

The professionalisation and institutionalisation of Atlantic Canadian small boat fishers have been fundamental intentions and consequences of both government development/allocation management policies, and, ironically, the adoption of broad-based representative forms of organisation such as associations and unions. The rise of the individualistic utilitarian and rapacious small boat fisher in concert with professionalisation and institutionalisation of the occupation is anything but coincidental. Indeed, the latter have contributed to the creation, in no small measure, of the former. The rationality of profession and formal institutions within the industrial capitalist system presumes, specifies and requires the isolation of individually defined interests as the meaningful units of reference and concern. This is the form and forum that makes sense to capitalist industrial bureaucrats and the socio-economic ideologies of market driven logic and evaluations. Pursuit of livelihoods and the determination of competence in such forms of organisation become contingent upon the extent to which players conform to the institutional rules governing the conditions of access and participation. Institutionalisation and professionalisation compel players to adopt the world views, the rationalities and behaviours of the dominant institutions which control access to livelihoods. In short, they compel compliance.

In the case of the small boat fisher, compliance translates into the adoption of the rationality of individual self-interest negotiated through and within formal capitalist industrial institutional settings. Consequently, the collective reference of family, familiars, kin and community become relatively meaningless to the individual fisher's pursuit of livelihood. In this manner, substantive socio-economic divisions rise among small boat fishers and their families and communities. Moreover, now unfettered by the constraints of making their living within the matrix of face-to-face intimate communities, advantaged fishers can become and increasingly are becoming, in their pursuit of self-interest, rapacious. Underscoring this process as a definitive feature of contemporary North American economy and culture, Lasch argues:

Both the growth of management and the proliferation of professions represent new forms of capitalist control... The struggle against bureaucracy therefore requires a struggle against capitalism itself. Ordinary citizens cannot resist professional dominance without also asserting control over production... In order to break the existing pattern of dependence and put an end to the erosion of competence, citizens will have to take the solution of their problems into their own hands (1979:396-397).

Small boat fishers and their families and communities have been subjected to the systematic erosion of their competence and way of life for under thirty years. Consequently, an ethos of self-help, co-operative self-reliance and community-referenced action remains expressed as more than a residual

memory of the way things were done in the past. This ethos can constitute the human resource foundation for the expression of an alternative approach to managing the socio-economic conditions in and through which small boat fishers and their communities realise satisfactory and sustainable livelihoods.

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Note

1. This process of change has been characterised in the American anthropological literature as the rise of atomistic communities and inter-personal relationships, especially within human settings undergoing so-called 'modernisation' (cf. Rubel and Kupferes 1968). Honigman (1968:220-221) identifies five characteristics of what he calls 'structural atomism,' including primary concern for one's own individual interests; retreat from intensive social contact with neighbours; focus on the nuclear family and reluctance to commit to large groups; reluctance to delegate or assume political authority; and local relationships characterised by strain and invidiousness. These qualities are all associated, in one way or another, with the social and interpersonal topographies consequent to the entrenchment of competitive utilitarian rationality in human behaviour, possibly terminating in what Lasch (1979) refers to as the culture of narcissism.

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