

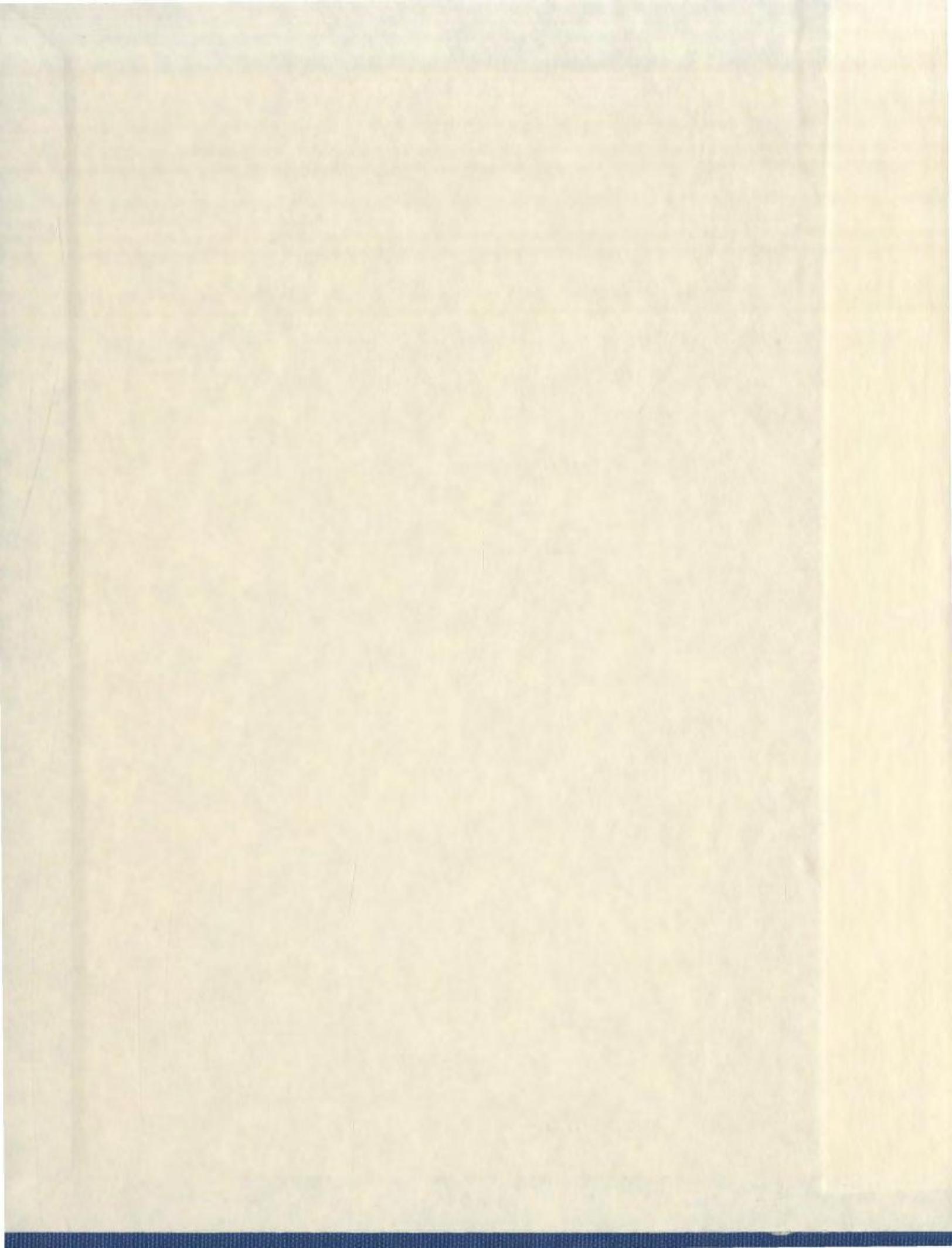
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MORATORIUM TIMES

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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SILVIA J. CAICEDO





CRAFTING IDENTITIES: MASCULINITIES, FEMININITIES & MARRIAGE  
IN COD MORATORIUM TIMES

by

© Silvia J. Caicedo, B.Ed. B.A.

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
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Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts  
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## **Abstract**

Following the announcement of the groundfish moratorium for Atlantic Canada in 1992, fishing communities saw the loss of close to 40 000 jobs, making this one of the largest industrial layoffs in Canadian history. Men and women were not only displaced from the job market, but also from one of the most gendered sites in society. This thesis examines the changing gender identities and relations of men and women in June's Cove, a small fishery-dependent community in Newfoundland. The study is a snapshot of the changes in gender attitudes, experiences, notions and practices of women and men in relation to themselves and each other in a shifting climate mediated by the cod moratorium.

Through a combination of participant observation and semi-structured, open-ended interviews conducted in the mid-1990s, I engaged twenty-three women and men from June's Cove in an exploration of notions, attitudes, perceptions and practices of femininity and masculinity. They narrated life stories imbued with their visions, and hopes while constructing meaning on gender identity, work, marriage and self.

The findings of this research suggest that women and men in June's Cove are engaged in a process of redefinition of notions and values related to marriage, work, "roles" and responsibilities, as well as their attitudes towards femininity and masculinity. Redefining and re-creating social constructs are adaptive responses to and a result of changing social and economic conditions that came with new pressures and demands. Adaptive responses become new social practices, thus changing the local social discourse, which in turn is inscribed in larger changes in gender perceptions and attitudes coming from the wider Canadian society.

The objective of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of how women and men cope with social change and creates social meaning around gender identities. The disruption caused by the moratorium produced a loss of traditional sites that sustained traditional gender 'roles,' while creating new sites and new practices through processes of change, interpretation and adaptation. The personal experiences of gender interpretation show how women and men responded to the interplay of concurrent processes such as the cod moratorium, education, social policies, and the local values and institutions.

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## Acknowledgements

My thanks and acknowledgments for the people to whom I am in debt are as *dispersed* as my roots. It would be only fitting to create a map of gratitude for all the people who at different times and places touched me, inspired me, pushed me, encouraged me, fed me and gave me comments that clarified my thinking as I unraveled this complex web of ideas. Their patience and love were invaluable. Unfortunately, it is not possible to list everyone, so the credits will be brief and geographical:

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Grounding fishers at home: Crafting gender identities in moratorium times**

On July 2, 1992, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans declared a 2-year moratorium on the harvesting of northern cod fish. "One of the greatest renewable marine resources in the world had collapsed" (FRCC.97.R3 1997: 1). The cod moratorium was followed by a wider groundfish moratorium, reaching many coastal communities in Eastern Canada. The announcement of the moratorium was one of the final steps taken by the government and scientists to acknowledge that the northern cod "biomass was at the lowest levels ever observed" (ibid), and something needed to be done to rebuild the stocks (Ommer 1998). Many wondered how the northern cod stocks could have been allowed to get to that point. Until the announcement of the northern cod moratorium in 1992, the "annual groundfish landings averaged 670 000t, creating jobs for an equivalent of 60 000 persons per year" for Atlantic Canada. Cod landings, which represented around 40% of the total Atlantic landings by volume during the period 1980-1990, [in 1997] represented less than 3%" (FRCC.97.R3 1997: 1).

Determining the direct (or indirect) causes of the collapse of the northern cod stocks is, at best, difficult; at worst, impossible. An entire decade of research has provided many possible answers, but it has also raised numerous questions. No complete agreement has been reached on the causes of the crisis, yet, it is possible to find a common thread in the arguments pointing to overfishing, powered by increasingly sophisticated harvesting techniques, as a key factor in the collapse of the groundfish stocks (Neis & Felt 2000; Davis 1993; Ommer 1998, 2002; Hutchings & Myers 1995; Hutchings & Ferguson 2000).

The northern cod moratorium and all the associated events attracted an unprecedented level of attention to the province. Researchers from the natural, social, psychological, and health fields were interested in understanding the issues surrounding the moratorium, its causes, its impacts, and its implications for the future of people who depended on fish harvesting and processing for their livelihoods. Reports indicate that over 40 000 jobs in the region were lost or endangered, making the groundfish moratoria in Atlantic Canada one of the largest industrial layoffs in Canadian history (FRCC.93.R3 1997: 1). The costs of the closure were great, creating “one of the worst social and economic disasters in Canadian history [to affect] coastal communities throughout Atlantic Canada and Québec” (ibid).

This thesis examines the gender attitudes and practices of women and men from a Newfoundland<sup>1</sup> fishing community living under the northern cod moratorium. The displacement of many thousands of plant workers and fishers across northeast Newfoundland and Southern Labrador created a situation where women and men had to negotiate space in the home, notions of marriage and “roles” and responsibilities in order to respond to new pressures and demands. This study looks at these negotiations and the changing notions, attitudes, experiences and practices of women and men in relation to themselves and each other in a shifting social climate mediated by the cod moratorium. The story presented here is a snapshot of a moment in the history of a study community taken in the mid-1990s. It helps us understand how women and men coped with the changes to their

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis the term Newfoundland is used in its more restrictive and geographical sense, to describe the island and not the province. However, it is acknowledged that the official name has been changed from Newfoundland to Newfoundland and Labrador to reflect the two main territories that constitute the province.

lives and livelihoods brought on by the cod moratorium as they sought to fashion and create social meaning.

In this thesis, narrations about their everyday acts and relationships, collected from women and men from *June's Cove*<sup>2</sup> provide windows into the processes by which they understood, interpreted, contested, created and changed local definitions of femininity and masculinity during the moratorium. Influenced by social trends in Canadian society, these processes have two functions: they serve as strategies for changing attitudes in the community, and as adaptive mechanisms for coping with changes brought on by the cod moratorium. The analysis of the gender strategies in *June's Cove* reveals the hermeneutical<sup>3</sup> elements lying at the heart of interpretations made by men and women to appropriate and transform what is significant from their past and present in preparation for a meaningful future. These narrations also inform us about their views on social institutions/practices, such as marriage, divorce, and cohabitation in the years following the implementation of the cod moratorium.

### **telling the story**

This thesis is an exercise in sociological storytelling; in interpretation, understanding, and translation. As a student from the "South," I came to Canada, to Newfoundland to learn about people, cultures, and gender. Gender is my sociological passion; I thirst to gain better understanding of relationships among women, among men, and among women and men. In this thesis, I offer a gender story; an account as constructed from my reading, my

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<sup>2</sup> June's Cove is a pseudonym.

<sup>3</sup> "*Hermeneutics* is a theory and method of interpreting human action and artifacts" (Jary & Jary 1991: 208-209). For this thesis I draw on the notion proposed by Gadamer (1975) who argued for a "provisional" and "partial" truth that comes from a continuing interpretation of what we know.

understanding, my experiences and my perceptions of the narrations I heard in June's Cove. This account presents the findings of my meanderings into the interstices of the local language and discourses, listening to what was said and *not said*; listening to the silences as places where we keep treasures. This is a testimony to my observations of gender identities in a small fishing community in Newfoundland written "within the bounds imposed by another language and another culture" (de Certeau 1984: x).

This story is a thick braid woven with many strands (voices): some of them belong to the women and men from June's Cove's; some to sociological theorists and previous researchers and, finally, some are my own. As a sociologist, my role in this story is to facilitate a dialogue among these voices and as a storyteller I present the proceedings. By presenting this story I hope to bring attention to the gender strategies and interpretive processes that men and women continually engage in to enact their identities as masculine and feminine entities. I also want to contribute to the understanding of gender processes in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **the setting: June's Cove**

*outport /aut-port/ (1642)*

- n*
1. a port other than the main port of a country
  2. a small fishing village esp. in Newfoundland
- Merriam-Webster collegiate dictionary (1995)

The history of Newfoundland has given the word outport a particular meaning. Outports are fishing settlements perched along bays and coves of the Island. Initially forbidden by the British government, these communities share similar histories, as well as geographic and social characteristics. Historically, the economies of outports have primarily depended on the fishery industry (harvesting and processing marine products), and, in some cases, on the

lumber industry for construction and shipbuilding. Given the isolated situations of these communities, and the harsh climatic conditions, some have characterized this as “living on the edge” (Felt and Sinclair 1995).

June's Cove, our study community, is located on the shores of the Avalon Peninsula, on the Northeast coast of Newfoundland, within the now infamous 2J-3KL<sup>4</sup> NAFO areas, the home of the northern cod stocks. A relatively small community, June's Cove was home to 460 people according to the 2001 census, down 12 percent from 519 in 1996 when I first visited the community (Statistics Canada - <http://www12.statcan.ca/>). As with many other small Newfoundland communities in the 1990's, this population reduction was primarily due to out-migration, caused, at least in part, by the northern cod and other moratoria (Sinclair *et al* 1997). Overall, the province registered a 7% population decrease in the same period (Statistics Canada - <http://geodepot.statcan.ca/>).

A highway connects June's Cove to several other medium sized and smaller communities. It takes approximately two hours to drive to St. John's, the largest urban centre and capital of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. There is a daily bus and taxi service linking all the communities located along this route, locally referred to as the highroad. Two main roads run through June's Cove and branch out into smaller lanes that reach almost every house in town. Most families (young and older) own their homes, which are built with wood. Some have vinyl siding; others wooden shingles or clapboard. The wooden houses are painted in white and soft tone colours. Every house has access to electricity, cable television and telephone and all are equipped with plumbing connected to

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<sup>4</sup> Area designations used by the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

the municipally run water and sewage system. Local residents must commute several miles to access a doctor, or to reach emergency health services and the mid-size hospital in nearby communities.

Concentrated around what could be considered the core part of town are larger buildings serving various purposes. The municipal building, where most of the governance affairs are conducted, also houses the library and a small childcare facility (run by students in the summer). Other larger buildings include: the primary school building; the grocery store; the retail store (which is the main store in town for consumer goods including food, clothing, and supplies); the take-out & convenience store; the post office; the building for the volunteer fire brigade; three churches (United, Salvation Army and Pentecostal); the gas station; and other publicly accessible spaces. The large fleet of local and visiting boats dock at the big wharf, and at the processing plant which, at the time of the study, processed crab, lobster and herring, is located nearby.

In the mid-1990's, the social life of June's Cove derived from interactions with immediate and extended family, as well as from involvement with various committees and socially concerned groups that promoted activities and projects for the betterment of the community. These included: church groups; the senior's club; the Lions Club; the Loyal Orange Lodge / LOBA; and, the recreation and library committees.

Like most coastal communities in Newfoundland, June's Cove's economic history has depended greatly on the exploitation of natural resources, including forests and such marine species as cod, snow crab, herring, lobster and other species. After the northern cod moratorium was declared in 1992, June's Cove was more fortunate than many other neighbouring fishing communities because the local plant and fishers had a history of

harvesting and processing other species including, in particular, snow crab. While many fish processing plants closed down or drastically reduced the number of workers, many of the June's Cove processing workers kept working at the plant throughout the 1990's.

Some local people not employed at the plant, survived through harvesting snow crab and lumpfish. Some were retired and others took early retirement when the government offered to buy back their fishing licenses. Some left and others relied on government support provided through two "adjustment programs", the Northern Cod Adjustment Recovery Program (NCARP) and The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) programs. Some of those who received TAGS payments retrained.

Not all local people depended directly on the fishery for their living. Other important occupations included construction (mainly homes), retail, health and education services, transport and equipment operations, government, clerical and recreation services. Many people used subsistence agriculture (growing vegetables) to supplement their incomes from paid work, TAGS and from Unemployment Insurance<sup>5</sup>.

### **gender and the northern cod moratorium**

In this section, I discuss some of the claims, assumptions and arguments about the links between gender relations, the fishery and the moratorium found in existing research on this topic. To this end, I will first describe some of the propositions about gender identities emerging from the maritime sociology literature on the crisis; I will then problematize these concepts to show their analytical shortcomings; and, finally, I will present the framework that informs this work.

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<sup>5</sup> In 1996, the federal government introduced Employment Insurance a program to replace the old Unemployment Insurance program.

Fishing communities like June's Cove have been the object of numerous studies looking at the social and economic impacts of the northern cod and other moratoria. Some of the larger themes emerging from the literature point to issues related to: the "end of fishing communities;" the resilience of the people (low crime rates despite poverty, unemployment and other social problems); out-migration and its impacts on the demographic structure and the economic potential of the province and outports; some of the adaptive strategies related to staying and leaving, retraining and changing occupations; fishery diversification initiatives (targeting different species); models for inclusion of local fishers' knowledge in the decision management of fisheries; and, other changes in the social structure of these communities (see for instance Davis 1993, 2000; Sinclair *et al* 1998; Ommer *et al* 1998, 2002; Canning & Strong 2002; Wright 1997; Neis 1995, 1997, 1998, 1990, Neis *et al* 2000). The themes most relevant to this thesis deal with the social changes occurring in Newfoundland and Labrador's communities as a result of the cod moratorium, also referred to as the fishery crisis. Works focusing on gender in the context of the moratoria are particularly important.

Most researchers treat the northern cod moratorium and other moratoria as a critical juncture in a long history of cod fishing and for many it also represents a disruption in the basis for identity for many communities in which fishing and fish processing were no longer viable economic activities for many. Underlying these claims is the assumption that fishing (as an activity), particularly cod fishing, was *the* site for the articulation of identities in these communities and therefore any disruption of cod fishing would threaten the identities of not only fishers, but their family members and the community as a whole (Davis 1983, 1993; Ommer 1998; Canning & Strong 2002). This view of the fishery is not

new; in fact earlier works emphasized fishing as *the* activity that defined many coastal communities in Newfoundland (Faris 1972; Brox 1972). While fishing, especially cod fishing, has been very important to the economic and social life of many Newfoundland communities, its relative importance has varied between communities. For example, other species including crab, lobster, shrimp, lumpfish, and capelin, have also been crucial in many communities.

Given the centrality of fishing to coastal communities, many researchers describe the fishery as the process that organizes the division of labour in these communities and one that also determines the gender roles and identities of individuals. Often depicted as complementary and marked by separate worlds with culturally accepted boundaries (Sinclair 1988; Felt and Sinclair 1992; Porter 1993), a division of labour based on this notion associates men with fishing (instrumental role); and women with worrying about and caring for fishermen, and working in fish processing (expressive role) (Davis 1983, 1993). This notion implicitly also suggests an identity drawn mainly from fishing.

A key proponent of this concept of the division of labour is Dona L. Davis (1983, 1993, 2000). Davis, one of the key voices in maritime sociology, conducted groundbreaking medical- anthropological research in Newfoundland looking at issues related to aging and menopause in the lives of women in Grey Rock Harbour. Based on fieldwork she carried out in the late 1970s, she observed that the “dichotomous characterization of land and sea, where land is viewed as the domain of women and sea as the domain of men” are “important and valued repositories of community occupational identity” (Davis 1993: 457-9). Following a return visit to the same community after the onset of the fishery crisis, Davis reported that “the transitions from a tradition-oriented, viable community fishery to a

modern, marginal welfare/employment economy has dramatically undermined the traditional complementarity of gendered labor and resulted in the constellation of gender ideology rooted in mutual antagonism” (Davis 1993: 459). While recognizing the changes in the division of labour the crisis had brought about, Davis views the fishery as the axis around which gender identities and roles are built, by suggesting that “men become women” in the absence of the fishery and that women had been displaced by men as they change the use and look of the home (ibid: 465-6).

It is important to unpack the contents of Davis’ claims and some of the assumptions these are based on. Her characterization of the “sexual” division of labour and particularly of the relationship between the crisis and gender identities focuses attention on households where men fished and women’s identity was centrally linked to their roles as fishers’ wives. Some of the assumptions behind this claim must be considered in more depth. First, the assumption that, in the absence of fishing, men find themselves land-bound and became women. This suggests that men in fishing community can *only* be men at sea, and the land imposes a feminine condition on them, making fishing the *only* place from which men draw their masculine identity. The second assumption is that women and their traits (femininity) are exclusively associated with the land as though they *naturally* belong together. The third assumption touches on the ability to transform and change contexts. Men, as portrayed by Davis, appear as the main (if not the *only*) agents of change, capable of changing their environment and changing themselves, while women seem to be static and unchanging. Women are depicted as fixed images that men adopt, and as displaced by men who are invading their natural territory.

Notwithstanding the economic importance of fishing in many coastal communities, I would argue that people in fishery-dependent communities derive their identities and organize their lives in multiple social sites and not exclusively within the fishery. However, the depiction of the division of labour in fishing communities, with all its problems is valuable to this thesis for two reasons. On the one hand, it presents a picture of communities where the impact of the moratorium can be recognized, given the economic and social importance of fishing. On the other hand, the very depiction of a community affected by the moratorium makes for a good place to distinguish (and reveal) other sites where gender identity formation occurs, and thus the depiction becomes relevant for what it veils as much as for what it shows. The discussion of gender relations and identities in June's Cove will demonstrate this.

I have focussed on Davis descriptions of the "sexual" division of labour, the implied gender identities and the suggestion about where these processes take place, since similar assumptions can be found in other works (see for instance Porter 1993; Sinclair 1988; Sinclair & Felt 1992, 1995, -- *et al* 1999; Neis 1992, Neis & Williams 1997, to name a few). Some of these descriptions also tend to oversimplify the relation between people and fishing and also overemphasize the centrality of fishing as the axis for occupational organization and for the formation of gender identities. Diversity exists in these communities, and cannot be fully captured if we rely on fixed, unitary and monolithic concepts of labour, and gender "roles." Unitary concepts do not account for uncertainties, the instability of concepts that do not represent or explain diversity and the multiplicity of sites for occupation and identity formation. In looking at gender identities in a fishing community, we have to realize that gender identity, gender relations and the gender

division of labour are simultaneously influenced, organized and shaped by multiple processes coexisting with the fishery. It is therefore necessary to look at the multiple sites where gender identity can be formed. Otherwise we run the risk of leaving out of our analysis all those people in fishing communities who do not live in fishing households or who do not neatly fit the mould built around these constructs, such as fishing couples, educators, construction workers, nurses, postal workers, machinery, truckers, hair dressers, store clerks, and many others who also make up fishing communities.

At the present juncture in the history of Newfoundland's fishing communities, it is essential to ensure all of the voices in these communities are heard, including the inaudible voices hidden in the folds and wrinkles of society. These voices can help us capture the complex dynamics and somewhat diverse outcomes associated with the ongoing negotiation of gender identities and relations within these communities. Doing so will help us better understand and represent reality and identify future alternatives. Jane Robinson (1994) makes this point very eloquently in her analysis of the experiences of women who lost their only source of employment when the processing plant in their community, Trepassey, closed its doors. Robinson criticizes the diversification, retraining and relocation programs created by government to deal with the plant closure in Trepassey. She argues that plant and government officials developed these programs from the perspective of a dominant discourse that had only a limited and incomplete understanding of these women, and that excluded their voices, as well as their definitions of themselves and their needs.

Government and plant officials are not alone in constructing and perpetuating stereotyped and overly limited images of women, men, and their communities. Social research has also contributed to dominant discourses, especially in its characterizations of

gender relations; what constitutes masculinity and femininity; and, in its assumptions about the “roles” of men and women in domestic work and marriage (Wright 1995). Earlier research on women and gender issues in Newfoundland and Labrador presented definitions that were reflected in policies such as the ones cited by Robinson (1994). However, as accurate as they may have been in the past, these old, static understandings and definitions of gender roles and relationships are increasingly inadequate to capture the complexity of contemporary life in fishing communities. Moving away from what we know is not easy and publications also show the struggle of authors to depict men and women in non-essentialist, non-static ways while grappling to find new terminology and theoretical perspectives (Marshall 2000; Harding 1990).

In her dissertation about masculinity and the fishery crisis, for instance, Nicole Power argues that while the crisis had a clear impact on men’s lives, their masculinity did not change. Instead,

men fishers continued to support “traditional” ideas about masculinity and live their lives as men, albeit in modified ways. Key to the relative stability of masculine fisher identities, subjectivities and practices is a desire for continuity in a tumultuous time and the availability of tools to resist change. Fishers drew on their particular positions as primary producers, a masculine maritime heritage, their history of material, social, political and geographical marginalisation and local struggles to develop a framework in which to understand and negotiate tensions (2002: vi).

She further argues that the reproduction of the status quo related to masculinity was beneficial to both women and men in the context of marginalization and crisis. Power’s research suggests that prior to and during the moratoria, fishing communities constructed and maintained gender relations around the division of labour axis and the social meanings and values within this were somehow controlled and created by men.

Power and Robinson have made serious attempts to transcend earlier static notions and to provide a different depiction of gender relations in Newfoundland. That said, the general suggestion in the literature continues to be that fishing communities and state policies are patriarchal and will tend to hold on to “tradition,” resisting change. More work is needed on the complex dynamics associated with negotiating gender and the processes that might influence the outcomes of such negotiations and how these are inscribed and perpetuated through practice and language. Language, and particularly social research language, is powerful and cannot afford to be inaccurate, especially because it has political impact. Social constructs and categories have defining power and we as researchers must expand the lexicon in order to accurately reflect the social practices they define.

### **everyday actions and research questions**

Gender relations and identities in Newfoundland and Labrador are complex. One of the goals of this study is to provide an alternate reading of situations described in earlier works to add texture to the gender arguments and debate. Drawing mainly on feminist and post-structuralist perspectives, this study problematizes static notions of gender identity. Here, masculinity and femininity are viewed as active and never-completed processes of “engendering and enculturation” (McNay 1993: 71). Such a fluid view is useful because it treats “roles” and marriage negotiations as the result of continuous interpretation and re-interpretation by individuals.

I chose June's Cove for this study because it had a vibrant crab fishery, which coexisted with the cod fishery and expanded after the cod fishery was closed. Unlike many communities, it had a local processing plant that stayed open after the northern cod

moratorium was declared. Hence, while some people in the community were severely and immediately affected by the moratorium, many were only indirectly affected by the moratorium and were able to continue their usual work. This case study of June's Cove would, I thought, serve as a reminder of the complexity of fishery-dependent communities and the related unevenness of the impacts of the cod moratoria.

I was interested in understanding how men and women would deal with and meet the new challenges brought on by the moratorium in this context of partial reliance on cod. In particular my interest was the negotiations and the mechanisms used to re-arrange their circumstances as this occupational disruption took hold of their community and region. I wanted to see what men did when they could no longer do what many of them had done their entire lives: to earn a living and define themselves as fishers and providers within a context where others were not so severely affected. I also wanted to know how women, many of whom remained employed, related to their partners in the home.

Everyday actions and behaviours constitute the nuances of social negotiations and strategies that influence gender identities and practices and "gender roles" in fishing communities. Looking at and understanding these could provide some clues to answer the larger question: how has the cod moratorium affected the gender identities of women and men (and gender relations) in June's Cove? Turned on its head the question reads: have the gender identities (and gender relations) of men and women been affected by the cod moratorium? This larger question comprises several smaller ones: What were the gender practices, attitudes and experiences of men and women prior to the moratorium? Did these change in first years of the moratorium? If yes, were these changes apparent to women and men? How did women and men characterize these changes? How were these changes

negotiated, enacted and practiced in their everyday lives? What meaning did they assign to these practices; to being a man or a woman, to marriage, to domestic “roles” and responsibilities? How did they explain them? The answers to these questions should, I thought, shed light on more conceptual questions such as: do people in rural fishing communities relate to the constructions of their gender relations found in the literature?

The initial research question evolved over time as the assumptions underlying it were challenged during the fieldwork. The first challenge I encountered was my conception of a fishing community. As noted earlier, not all people who live in a fishery-dependent community share the same sense of that place. Calling it a fishing community denies or veils the existence of community members who do not fish for a living and their contribution to the community. This became clear as narrators themselves expressed their sense of exclusion by the terms used in media and policy reports describing the northern cod moratorium and their communities. Many of the assumptions I took into the field about gender arrangements in fishing communities were also challenged. These included assumptions about: the existence of a unified community identity; fishing as sites for gender formation; the relationship between occupation and gender and social arrangements; the ability of structures (occupational, economic, environmental, and political) to change gender roles; and my views of individuals as entities in a constant, dialectical relationship with others and their own social context.

I have constructed this thesis by sifting through these assumptions, challenging earlier descriptions, and using the narratives of people from June’s Cove and my own observations to develop an alternative reading of gender dynamics in rural communities that emphasizes the role these communities play in decentralizing meaning creation

processes away from urban centres. Instead of concentrating on power relations between men and women, I focus on the relations among different groups of men and women, and between them and their larger community. The thesis looks at how these relations inform and are informed by discursive gender strategies. By looking at the mechanisms and settings that inform the cultural and social division of labour, gender norms, roles and attitudes, and women's and men's work, I will show how people in June's Cove construct and contest views on gender identities. I will also examine changes in "roles" and responsibilities associated with domestic work and childcare, as well the changed practices of marriage and common-law unions that appear to be linked not only to local events but to larger changes in Canadian society.

This thesis is organized into 6 chapters. Chapter 2 traces some of the discussions surrounding the gender debate in social theorizing as these contribute to the understanding of gender dynamics and change. Relying mainly on post-structural and feminist theories and postulates, the framework used in this thesis also draws on the works of post-modern and structuralist authors, as well as the growing body of work on masculinities/men's studies. Taken together these perspectives provide the analytical tools needed to understand social processes in ways that go beyond positivistic, static notions of gender dynamics and identities. The discussion starts by examining the analytical significance of gender within sociology and feminist work and then traces the strategic and theoretical intersections between post-modernism, poststructuralism, gender theory, and men's studies. Finally, it explores the ways in which these concepts proved to be useful tools to understand gender relations between women and men in June's Cove as they negotiated local customs, meanings of roles and responsibilities at the home and in the community.

Chapter 3 lays out the methodological approach and the analytical tools used in this study, and presents a reflective examination of two key methodological issues that influenced the research process: the issue of congruence of principles and that related to the positionality of the actors involved in the research process. It examines the importance of ensuring methodological and theoretical congruence in conducting ethnographic research on issues of identity. More specifically, the chapter attempts to make explicit the connections between post-structural, discourse analysis and qualitative methodology and their power to capture the diversity of voices, and perspectives that shape (and re-shape) the complex tapestry of gender geographies observed in June's Cove. The chapter chronicles the research experience and the interpretive processes involved, ethical issues, and the iterative process informing issues related to the positionality of researcher vis-à-vis the community.

Based on the narratives collected by observation and through interviews during fieldwork in June's Cove, Chapter 4 examines the notions, attitudes and practices of partner selection, marriage and family presented to me by the women and men of June's Cove. Situating the discussion in the context of the cod moratorium, it historicizes events and processes that are subject to multiple influences including local socio-economic situations and the larger social trends in Canadian society. Through an examination of processes of understanding, interpretation, contestation and meaning creation with special attention to marital discursive strategies, the chapter shows: a) that the gendered actions of women and men in June's Cove are interpretive adaptations and mechanisms to preserve and change the meaning of marriage; and, b) that while changes to marriage in June's Cove are part of, and influenced by, larger social trends and tendencies in Canadian society, these changes also

offer new sites/spaces and mechanisms for coping with the changes forced onto the community by the moratorium. The analysis used is premised on the assumption of mutual conditioning between individuals and the social context in which they live.

Chapter 5 examines the discursive strategies of men and women as they adapted to a changing environment, with particular attention to notions, attitudes, perceptions, and practices of gender (i.e., femininity and masculinity). I look at their attitudes mainly in relation to work roles and responsibilities, since this is the area that was most directly affected by the fishery crisis. Opportunities for employment were diminished and changed and I explore how this affected their self-perceptions and conceptions of themselves as gendered individuals. Notions of masculinity and femininity are viewed through a post-structuralist lens, which enables me to deconstruct and unfold the conventional injunctions and look into the crevices that hide complexities and diversities.

In the final chapter, I conclude that gender is a never-completed process involving the individual, others and the social contexts in which they live. I assert that the moratorium did influence the gender identities of women and men in June's Cove, but that we need to use a different theoretical lens from those commonly used if we are to provide a more accurate picture of gender relations in rural communities. In addition, I argue that the hermeneutical processes taking place in small outports in Newfoundland call for different definitions of the people from those that describe them as mere depositories of tradition or as uncritical adopters of social trends happening in urban settings. Rural communities are not static and unchanging places locked in tradition and in the past, but rather respond with adaptive mechanisms to changes (of social and ecological magnitude) from a perspective that incorporates what they know and learned in the past and present and that permits them

to create new meanings for the future through attitudes and behaviours that enable them survive.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical Frameworks: Framing gender, identity and discursive strategies

The possibility of a challenge to men's taken-for-granted dominant masculinities could facilitate the emergence of less coercive and less divisive organizational structures, cultures and practices, a fundamental rethinking of the social organization of the domestic division of labour and a transformation of 'men' at 'work'. (Collinson and Hearn 1996: 72)

Gender (and its associated issues) constitutes one of the most contested subjects in contemporary psychological, political and social theory. Gender's contested character stems in part from the various understandings, meanings, uses and applications that people have derived from doing it, analyzing it, researching it, and working with *it*.

This chapter lays out the theoretical and analytical elements supporting this thesis. Specifically, this chapter presents the theoretical basis and concepts used to analyze the gender dynamics in June's Cove in the mid-1990s. The first part of the chapter examines some of the theoretical debates about gender and how these can contribute to the understanding of gender dynamics and changing gender patterns. Also, it looks at the points of intersection where post-structural and feminist theories and postulates can meet to form a theoretical framework that includes post-modern and structuralist views, as well as postulates from the growing body of work on masculinities/men's studies. Combining these perspectives provides the analytical tools needed to move beyond positivistic, static notions of gender dynamics and identities. The last section of this chapter is the exploration of a dialogue between the theory and the analytical concepts presented and the data collected for the empirical study of gender relations and identities in June's Cove.

The central analytical premise of this thesis is that gender patterns and categories are inherently unstable, never-completed processes constructed through an ongoing dialogue between individuals or groups of individuals and the contexts in which they live. From this perspective, the re-construction of gender patterns in June's Cove would require a process involving the re-negotiation of definitions of masculinity and femininity and the associated 'roles' and responsibilities. It would also require a re-configuration of social and individual expectations for men and women and customary marriage norms. Negotiations and re-configurations of gender patterns occur in multiple settings and at varying scales (individual, household, community) and are the result of social relationships and the mutual conditioning between the local context and the broader society. The acts/practices and bodily enactments of gender identity are mechanisms the men and women of June's Cove can use to cope with pressures imposed by the fishery crisis in Newfoundland and with dramatic social, economic and political changes taking place in Canada as whole.

### **gender, qu'est-ce que c'est ?**

The word *gender* has had a long and interesting trajectory in the various academic disciplines. The journey of gender is not over; it continues to be used, analyzed and transformed in many cultural, social and political settings. It has become a general concept. However there is no unified understanding of its meaning, and thus gender means *different* things to many people.

The widespread use of *gender* as a term, albeit with varying meanings, provides an opportunity to ask questions and to push the edges of comfort and certainty and can be

used to understand change. *Gender* has followed different sociological trajectories. “[I]n its most common usage ... the term ‘gender’ means the cultural difference of women from men, based on the biological division between male and female. Dichotomy and difference are the substance of the idea” (Connell 2002: 8)<sup>1</sup>. It has also been used as a *descriptive* variable, replacing sex; as an *explanatory* concept to analyze causal linkages or explanations (Connell 2002: 8-10); as a *performative* category to capture gendered embodiments (Butler 2002: 48-50); as a *strategic* tool to leverage change, ascribing it a political character (Marshall 2000: 73-81). While academics have not been the only group grappling with the elusive gender concept and theories about gender, it is “much to the credit of both feminist academics and feminist activists (not mutually exclusive categories!) that ‘gender’, ‘gender equality’, ‘gender analysis’, ‘gender perspective’, and so on have become part of the discourse of public policy, both in Canada and in the international context” (Marshall 2000: 36).

Because it emphasizes social explanations, gender as a sociological concept has been promoted as an alternative *natural/biological* explanations for differences between men and women. For social scientists, *gender* is a more appealing term than *sex*, especially since the term *sex* places undue focus on difference and explains it in biological terms. Biological deterministic research thus far has *not* produced irrefutable evidence to support claims of a natural hierarchy and the superiority of one sex over the other (Armstrong and Armstrong 1994; Connell 2002; Delphy 1993).

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<sup>1</sup> For more detailed discussions on the gender debates, and their implications for sociological analysis, see Marshall 1994 and 2000; Connell 2002; Jackson and Scott 2002.

Emphasizing the social requires moving the discussion from *sex* to *gender*, a very important step in the feminist struggle to prove that inequalities are not *natural* and to further the social analysis of gender. The emphasis on the *social* character of gender exposed its internal make-up, as a social construct, which also suggests the possibilities for its re- or deconstruction. Further, defining gender as a social construct implies that all gender categories (femininities and masculinities) are also social constructs, which can be reconfigured within social milieu in order to change “sex roles” through socialization.

This particular articulation of gender is welcomed and has become widespread within activist and academic circles. Liberal feminists gave this idea a home. As suggested by Weedon (1987: 4), “Liberal feminism aims to achieve full equality of opportunity in all spheres of life without radically transforming the present social and political system.” Nonetheless, thinking of gender categories in social terms has not been unproblematic. In the process of using it, analyzing it and applying it, questions have been raised about the “sex role” proposition originally embraced by liberal feminists. While liberal feminists optimistically thought that since “oppressive gender arrangements [were] the product of past choices, [they] could be easily changed by fresh choices,” followed by changes in sex roles expectations and socialization (Connell 2002: 34), others realized that this proposition had limitations. One reason for this is that “the idea of gender as culturally chosen difference (‘sex roles’) was unable to explain why one side of that difference, the masculine, was consistently more highly valued than the other” (Connell 2002: 34-5).

“Sex roles” theory did not explain why there is a different valuation of the work done by women and men or the widespread extent of male dominance; neither did it

propose a radical change in the make up of society or take account of other types of domination and differences. In *Rethinking Sex and Gender*, Christine Delphy argues that “we must first define and lay claim to a territory for the social, having a different conceptual location from that of sex but tied to the traditional sense of the word ‘sex’, in order to be able, from this strategic location, to challenge the traditional meaning of ‘sex’”(1993: 6). She further argues that for this to happen, we must first renounce some truths. “These ‘truths’ make us feel comfortable, as do all certainties, but they stop us asking questions-and asking questions is the surest, if not the only way to getting answers” (Ibid: 55).

From the articulation of questions and doubts about “sex roles” theory (but not necessarily because of this articulation!), a new focus emerged that moved the attention of academics from looking solely at the differences (biological, psychological) between men and women to looking at the *relations* and pattern of relations between women and men, as well as within genders. As Connell puts it:

Gender is, above all, a matter of the social relations within which individuals and groups act. Gender relations do include difference and dichotomy, but also include many other patterns. For instance, gender in the contemporary world involves massive hierarchies of power among men – as seen in multinationals, or armies – which can in no sense be reduced to ‘male/female differences’, however caused (2002: 9).

### **new spaces: gender theories meet masculinities<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> In reviewing the literature for this chapter, I was struck by the names and labels of the various disciplines. For instance, when looking for literature on gender or women’s movements, the most common identifiers were: women’s studies, feminism, feminist theory, sociology – women, sex roles. In contrast, in my search for information on gender and men I found: men’s studies, men, masculinities, sex differences, sex role, masculinity (Psychology). I felt that the discipline lacked the words to define itself in terms that explained the theoretical origin or the epistemological

Conceptualizing gender as a social, relational category also meant that it was possible to challenge the essentialized notions of men and women (and by extension masculinities and femininities) inferred by the “sex role” perspective. It became necessary to look at internal differences that the binary notions ignored. This implied identifying more than “one” type of domination (men over women) and acknowledging diversity in subjectivities and identities in society that cut across class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other forms of *social differentiation* (di Leonardo 1991; Fraser 1989; Connell 1995 and 2002; McNay 1992; Jackson & Scott 2002).

With the changes described above, new doors were opened in the academy and on the street, and new marginal voices joined the epistemological centres. Among them, the proponents of queer theory and men’s studies who have articulated similar criticisms, calling for a reconfiguration of concepts to account for the experiences that do not neatly fit within the definitions of hegemonic masculinity or patriarchy that tend to define men as the dominant group *par excellence* ignoring the conflicts and diversity within male groups<sup>3</sup>. Marshall aptly notes:

Paralleling the critique of gender categories as essentializing, universalizing, and shoring up the binary that enacts them, queer theory has taken the categorization of sexual identities –lesbian, gay, heterosexual, homosexual –and contested the manner in which they have been accorded stability in earlier theoretical formulations. Queer theory emphasizes *incoherence* and *instability* in configuration of sex, gender, and sexual desire. Phenomena such as intersexuality, transgenering, and cross-dressing are taken as exemplifying the limits of stable identity categories, and are seen to radically ‘trouble up’ the binaries of man/woman and hetero/homo (Marshall 2000: 59-60).

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character of Men’s Studies. It is not the equivalent of “feminist theory.” Jeff Hearn (1996) has discussed this in detail.

<sup>3</sup> For more detailed discussions, see for instance: Seidler 1989 and 1997; Kimmel 1987 and 1992; Hearn 1989 and 1994; Seidman 1994, 1995, 1997; Lorber 1993 and 1994; Foucault 1986.

Adding to the complexity of the map of masculinities and instability of social categories, social theorists working on men's issues have charged that notions of '*a masculinity*' and '*a patriarchy*' oversimplify the structures of gender. Men's voices and positions are as varied as those of women/feminists, and so are their claims –and these vary in perspective and goals.<sup>4</sup> Theorists have identified a wide range of men's/masculine positions: a pro-feminist position, for instance, recognizes men's privileged place in society and engages in self-criticism and reflection (Hearn 1994; Connell 1995; Kuypers 1999; MacInnes 1998); a more conservative position has also been documented that aims at reclaiming and re-instituting 'the meaning of manhood' and "keeping women in their place" upholding traditional roles since gender theorists and feminists are perceived as threats to the stability of the social order (Messner 1997). Finally, there are those who recognize the paradoxes of men's power and want to address the inequalities within their own gender while at the same time pursuing political goals for equal rights for all. They seek the opportunity to enact a different type of masculinity, one that allows them to transgress *traditional roles* and become nurturing fathers, friends, and partners to each other and to women (Kaufman 1999; Connell 2002). Their agenda is broad; they want to be able to organize themselves as men to advocate for "freedom of choice, ... childcare programs, and new initiatives that challenge men's violence, workplace affirmative action programs" (Kaufman 1999: 94-5).

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Messner (1997) and Joseph A. Kuypers (1999) offer a more detailed account the various men's movements.

Underlying these challenges and contributions are two issues which can be articulated as follows: 1) the inadequacy of terms such as men and women or masculine and feminine as complete and all-encompassing referents for the gender experiences of *all* men and women and the need to qualify the difference within the genders. The second issue is closely related and points to the active role of individuals in crafting their *selves* in society beyond or within the cultural and social markers provided. The active engagement of individuals creates the possibilities and spaces where social boundaries can be transgressed and redefined, thus subverting the normative and regulatory power of concepts, institutions, expectations and norms (MacInnes 1998; Fraser 1989; Marshall 2000).

There are voices coming from the street and from academia that reject and actively reconfigure dominant definitions of men and women. It can be argued, then, that gender is better understood as a social category, a social relationship, and at the same time as the process of constructing social categories. Like relationships, gender is changing, and changeable: a fluid, *unstable*, never completed process (Marshall 2000; Connell 1995 and 2002; Brod 1987). This notion is consistent with those put forth by poststructuralists (sociologists, philosophers, feminists), which calls for looking at gender identity formation and the social relations in which they are produced as *processes* rather than *structures*.

### **poststructuralist hints of gender identity and work**

In this section I examine post-structural and feminist thoughts on gender identity and work. For post-structural feminists gender identity formation is “an active and never-

completed process of engendering and enculturation” and it is therefore necessary to problematize static notions of gender identities, as these “obscure the slippages and multiple experiences which occur between or outside of the polarized options of masculinity and femininity” (McNay 1992: 71). Individuals craft their gender identities, negotiate gender “roles”; and enact bodily gendered performances through a continuous process of interpretation and re-interpretation of cultural and social injunctions and prescriptions of the context in which they live and work.

In this particular study, these perspectives promise to be an effective tool for unveiling, and analyzing gender relations and identities (in the plural) in a post-moratorium Newfoundland “fishery-dependent community.” It is widely accepted that the division of labour occupies a central place in the process of identity formation. The fishery crisis in its most tangible form, the northern cod moratorium, creates a rich setting for looking at how men and women in fishing communities reconfigure their gender relations, and negotiate spaces *vis-à-vis* a dramatic disruption in the organizational structure of work that derailed the social order. Work opportunities and spaces for enacting socially accepted ‘roles’ changed in a dramatic way in June’s Cove as elsewhere, particularly for those directly affected by the moratorium and therefore new discursive strategies are needed to cope. However, as the case of June’s Cove reminds us, the cod fishery was not synonymous with fisheries and fishery-dependence in Newfoundland communities.

The organization of the division of labour provides some clues about the position that men and women occupy within a community, the value of work, whose work is considered valuable, etc. In addition, the organization of labour, both at the larger scale -

in the community, and the smaller scale - in the household, constitutes an important social site that can enable or constrain different processes of gender identity formation.

Finally, issues of power are deeply embedded within it. In her article, *Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology*, Judith Lorber articulates this point very well:

Gendered people do not emerge from physiology or hormones but from the exigencies of the social order, mostly, from the need for a reliable division of the work of food production and the social (not physical) reproduction of new members. The moral imperatives of religion and cultural representations reinforce the boundary lines among genders and ensure that what is demanded, what is permitted, and what is tabooed for the people in each gender is well-known and followed by most (1993: 577-8).

Although the effective functioning of a society significantly depends on some form of cultural cohesion that ensures some degree of social stability in terms of roles and responsibilities, individuals comply with accepted rules and norms from subjective perspectives. Dorinne Kondo looks at subjectivities and work in her book, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace* (1990). In the context of this discussion, this book is relevant as it offers a post-structural view of issues of the self, subjectivity, identity formation, and larger structures of signification such as the division of labour. It is an account of the processes in which women and men are involved which she refers to as the “crafting of the selves”, and the ways various forms of power are enacted. Here, Kondo spells out some of the theoretical concerns that surround the debates on identity, and the strategy she uses to address them. By contrasting her experience with that of her co-workers, she presents an analysis of the private sphere (*UCHI*), gender, and part-time work as these are perceived in Japan.

Another reason why Kondo's work is relevant to this study relates to the fact that she analyzes gender identity formation and work in a context with a set of strong gender norms and traditions similar to those found in June's Cove. The book is concerned with the experiences and processes of identification, fragmentation, and transformation of the selves, *in the plural*, in a Japanese workplace. By looking at "how selfhood is constructed in the arenas of company and family" in a particular neighbourhood in Tokyo, she set out to challenge Western notions of the self. Kondo views identities/selves not as fixed categories, but rather as the ever-changing product of constant negotiations in a specific context. Drawing on her own experience of multiple selves as researcher, daughter, guest, neighbour, worker, young woman, wife, Japanese American, American, etc., Kondo presents the many layers of her identity manifested as she was interpreted by her informants who tried to fit her into a meaningful category.

Kondo uses the specificity of her experiences as an evocative rhetorical and theoretical frame for analysis and to claim that experiences "*become*" theory (1990: 8). This claim constitutes the springboard for her attack on the essentialist quality of Western notions of self/subject/individual and binarisms such as society/individual, self/collective, etc., which give primacy to notions of a "bounded and fixed" individual/self, and, in so doing, imply the separation of the individual from the world/context/society/culture in which she or he lives. Kondo identifies the "fixity" in the English language, by focussing on the "I" that assumes a "self" that marches "unchanged" and "untouched" from one situation to another (1990: 8-23). In contrast, the Japanese "selves" are contextually constructed, relationally defined and "are enacted everyday, every time Japanese people speak Japanese" (ibid: 26-29). She interrogates the fact that despite the efforts made to

“widen” and “relativize” totalizing notions and categories, the categories have been preserved. And yet, she herself does not resolve this dilemma.

She also examines gender and work to show how her Japanese co-workers articulate their different identities in the company and in the *uchi* (the private sphere). In her account of these working class Japanese women, she weighs their views of work, commitment to the *uchi*, and their relation to men, against the more mainstream depictions of Japanese women enacted by “middle-class Professional Japanese Housewives”. She argues that the Japanese working class women she met enact an interpretation of the conventions and dictates of the woman's place. By working outside the home for the sake of the betterment of the home, they are stretching the boundaries of the *uchi*; and as part-time workers, they challenge celebrated notions of the enduring masculine worker.

Kondo's interrogations are very useful, as they further the conception of the relationship of self and society, from one in which the elements can theoretically be separated, to one in which, the mere contemplation of such separation would divest each element of its signification/meaning. And yet, her exploration is not consistent with her initial line of argument, as the Japanese women workers presented in chapter eight of her book, in my opinion, are *still* defined in the same terms, both in the *uchi* (the private sphere) and in the *soto* (the public sphere). Kondo's attempt to avoid the separation of the subjects from their context results in the reification of social structures (such as the workplace) to a high level and bestows upon them an unquestionable ability to determine the script and the role that individuals would play. Women and men as depicted by

Kondo, appear to be less in control of their own selves. Far from “crafting” their selves, their actions are reduced to a mere enactment of cultural interdictions and prescriptions.

Kondo’s key contribution to this discussion is her use of post-structuralism to understand subjectivities and gender identities in relation to work and change in the contexts where women work. Also important is the suggestion that work and the act of working can be seen as the sites where gender can be articulated, enacted, and ‘crafted’ by individuals through their interactions with others. These two themes (subjectivities and work as a site) speak directly to the analysis of the gender identities of men and women in June’s Cove. From this perspective, there are no certainties when looking at gender, as post-structuralism abandons “humanist conceptions of the individual which are still central to Western philosophy and political and social organization” and proposes “a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory, and in process, constantly being constituted each time we think or speak” (Weedon 1987: 33). Weedon, McNay and other feminists have adopted and used these concepts as a way establishing a dialogue between post-structuralist and feminist postulates.

### *the aesthetics of transgression*

McNay’s book *Foucault and Feminism* is an evaluation of the theoretical strategies advanced by Foucault in the later years of his career and the implications of poststructuralist thought for feminism. Using Foucault’s theory of power and bodies, feminists have tried to explain women’s oppression. As McNay notes, “[t]he engagement between feminist theory and the thought of Michel Foucault has tended to centre around the work of his middle years, most notably *Discipline and Punish* [1977] and the first

volume of *The History of Sexuality* [1978]. McNay analyzes this relationship by surveying Foucault's theoretical trajectory: from his studies of systems or technologies of power and domination to his later work on the technologies of the self. Through this survey she identifies what she refers to as Foucault's "return to the subject" (1992: 48), a theme of interest to feminists.

The subject/individual as presented by Foucault is no longer the filling for a predetermined mould/matrix, but rather the result of an active and never-complete process of mutual conditioning between the individual and the structures. McNay finds this depiction of the individual as a fluid category very pertinent to the ongoing debates about gendered subjects. As Foucault "returns to the subject" through his analysis of the technologies of the 'self' – defined as "a certain number of practices and techniques through which individuals *actively* fashion their own identities"—he finds a way to "explain how individuals may escape the homogenizing tendencies of power in modern society through the assertion of their autonomy" (1992: 3).

In *The History of Sexuality: The Care of the Self* (1988), Foucault offers an historical analysis of the evolution of technology of the self. His analysis is mainly concerned with understanding moral and intellectual regulation and problematization of the ethical experience of the *aphrodisia* (sexual pleasure and desire) in the first century of our era. In the section entitled *the cultivation of the self*, Foucault presents three items that have to be considered when thinking about "individualism" and valuation of 'private life' that influence the cultivation of the self:

- (1) the individualistic attitude, characterized by the absolute value attributed to the individual in his singularity and by the degree of independence conceded to him *vis-à-vis* the group to which he belong and the institutions to which he is

answerable; (2) the positive valuation of private life, that is, the importance granted to family relationships, to the form of domestic activity, and to the domain of patrimonial interests; (3) the intensity of the relation to self, that is, of the forms in which one is called upon to take oneself as an object of knowledge and a field of action, so as to transform, correct, and purify oneself, and to find salvation (1988:42).

The significance of Foucault's concept of the *cultivation of the self* lies in the attention it gives to processes of belonging and relational formation of the self *vis-à-vis* the social context, its interdictions, and the values of the context where one lives. The cultivation of the self is dominated by the principle that one must "take care of oneself" which is "what establishes its necessity, presides over its development, and organizes its practice" (Foucault 1988: 43).

Foucault's main assertion in his theory about the practices and technologies of the self suggests an individual capable of interpreting structures –political, cultural, social, religious, etc—and of making a conscious choice to change them through interaction. The ability of individuals to interpret and transcend structures is what he refers to as ethical<sup>5</sup> agency (1993). Transcending structural boundaries in Foucault's view is a liberating exercise for the individual and it is bound to find resistance. For instance, gendered transgressions may be met by great resistance in the beginning, but this resistance eventually wears thin and it is eventually defeated through the constant challenging of structural boundaries.

Foucault also emphasizes the importance of identifying the points of integration between the technologies of domination and the technologies of the self for it is in these

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<sup>5</sup> Ethics refers to the actions individuals take to interpret the reality around them.

points of integration that processes of “renunciation” or “resistance/liberation” take place. His interest in the points of integration between discussion of processes of “renunciation” and “resistance/liberation” comes from his genealogical study of the moral codes and moral ethics of Christian and Greek religious philosophy<sup>6</sup>. He found that in the classical Greek tradition self-examination was part of an “ancient tradition...toward the autonomy of the directed,” and it did not imply a complete or definite obedience to one's master, but rather the “relationship of two wills” (1993: 225; McNay 1992: 61). In contrast, in the Christian tradition the processes of self-examination and confession played a crucial role in discovering what is inside oneself and telling the truth about oneself. The truth, the dogma imposed on the individual, did not encourage autonomy but rather called for renunciation and permanent sacrifice of one's self to the truth (1993: 226; McNay 1992: 62). Identifying the points of intersection between dogma (codes and norms) and self mastery (ethics of the self) can turn limits into enabling sites where transgression contributes to fashioning the self.

Foucault insists that the classical Greek ethics of the self is comparable to the ethics exhibited in contemporary discourses of identity politics –feminist, gay, racial, etc. It is possible to redefine categories, signifiers and processes beyond the markers and interdictions existing within hierarchical structures, which require the sacrifice of the self. This understanding of the self is theoretically attractive to feminists who find in it the possibility of recreating the feminine self beyond the prescriptions imposed on them by

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<sup>6</sup> By moral ethics he refers to the relation between the individual and the social interdictions, while moral codes refer to the imposed moral rules that individuals have to embrace. For a detailed discussion on these subjects see, *History of Sexuality: The Care of the Self* vol. 3; *Technologies of the Self* 1988; “About the Hermeneutics of the Self” 1993; McNay 1992.

conventional cultural and theoretical dictates. McNay for instance notes that: “[w]hat is of significance here are the implications of Foucault’s revised understanding of the individual for feminist theory, especially given feminist dissatisfaction with his earlier model of individual as ‘docile’ bodies” (1992: 63).

McNay’s enthusiasm with Foucault’s understanding of the contemporary self is matched by her critical assessment of the shortcomings of his proposition. She is particularly concerned with the practical implications of the aesthetics of the self and writes:

The idea of aesthetics or style is not an entirely adequate category within which to understand aspects of the formation of gender identity. ... Embedded in the idea of a stylization of the self is a notion of choice. Practices of the self, [according to Foucault], are intentional and voluntary actions by which individuals seek to understand and transform themselves in an active fashion. What this notion of aesthetics does not tackle very well, in relation to gender and sexuality, is the involuntary and biological dimensions to sexuality... [T]hese dimensions cannot be overcome or transformed simply through a conscious act of self-stylization (ibid: 75, 80).

She further argues that Foucault’s notion of an aesthetics of existence is too rational and “does not provide an explanation of how individuals invest in certain discursive positions in a not necessarily conscious or rational way” (ibid: 80-81). She resolves this dilemma by drawing on Wendy Holloway’s concept of investment, that claims:

people have investment ... in taking up certain positions in discourses ... there will be some satisfaction or pay off or reward ... for that person. The satisfaction may well be in contradiction to other resultant feelings (Holloway 1984: 238, cited in McNay 1992: 81).

The notion of investment, in McNay’s opinion, helps to explain the motivation of people who place themselves in positions that are commonly regarded as subordinate. McNay also criticizes Foucault for his refusal to touch on the sexual difference (between men and

women), which in part was a strategy to desexualize or to invite others to “think in terms other than the polarities of masculine and feminine” (1992: 194). She contends that, “whilst most feminists would acknowledge that on a political level Foucault is sympathetic to their work, on a theoretical level many may be forced to conclude that his silence on his issue of sexual difference is not enough to absolve his thought of the charge of androcentrism” (1992: 195).

Despite the limitations identified in Foucault's theory, McNay believes that the idea of the practice of the self is a very significant model to help us understand the quest for the self in contemporary society. The appeal of this model lies in the fact that it portrays both the subject and the structures as having a relation of mutual dependency. A double conditioning takes place with the socially constituted subject interpreting and changing the constraining structures. She concludes her book by saying that “Foucault's theory of an ethics of self-actualization based on the independent use of reason reflects more accurately the current concerns of many feminist theorists [and] ... can be seen as tentatively mapping out some of the contours for a renewed development of feminist theory and debate” (1992: 198).

There is a considerable body of work coming out of feminist ranks that “finds an impulse toward locating and building on convergences between feminist thought and other critical approaches” notwithstanding its androcentric character, since they provide the frameworks to “examine the dynamics through which power relations are engendered.” Many feminists<sup>7</sup> have found the links between their own preoccupations

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<sup>7</sup> Fraser 1989; McNay 1992; Faith 1994; Weedon 1987; Butler 1987; Cocks 1989; Eisenstein 1988; Fuss 1989, 1991; Marshall 1994, 2000, among others.

and Michel Foucault's work. This process has not been smooth, but rather a "*critical dialogue with the idea of having located a useful ally as well as a sparring partner*" (Faith 1994: 36 – emphasis added).

McNay's and Foucault's discussions about the practices of the self are mainly concerned with the "desiring subject," i.e. the sexuality of the self. While, it is clear that sexuality is an integral part of gender identity and, as they have pointed out, notions about the sexuality of individuals do enter larger discourses, these topics are not the focus of this study. But their work is still useful for understanding the process of changing gender identities, especially when they are understood as "... both socially constructed and the consequence of individual and collective choices within the parameters of regulated freedoms" (Faith 1994: 41). The key to this assertion is that making one's identity implies *agency* and choice without ignoring how this is related to the context in which individuals live.

### **conditions of possibility in June's Cove**

In this thesis, I use the concepts presented above in the discussion of gender and poststructuralist theories to inform my analysis of gender identities and relations in June's Cove. My key interest is to understand relations of gender, but I am not looking at "power relations" *per se*, as these have been discussed by others.<sup>8</sup> I should note that it is my understanding and my position that men and "masculinities" continue to dominate the social, cultural spaces and settings in June's Cove and elsewhere, and that men continue

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<sup>8</sup> Neis 1990, 1991, 1993, 1995, 2000; Sinclair 1988, 1996, 1999; Davis 1993, 1995, 2000; Robinson 1995; McCay 1995, Porter 1985, 1993; Felt and Sinclair 1990, Cullum 1992, 1993, 1997; to name a few.

to define and are the reference points for norms and concepts in many fields. This study is concerned with finding the points where resistance is articulated in the form of alternatives to and challenges of socially accepted markers.

Theory is better understood when it is applied to specific examples and requires the understanding of the specificities of a given situation. Such theories can help us make sense of the narratives and data collected for this study and are used to examine four key aspects of life in the community in the context of the cod moratorium: a) *changing conditions*: the cod moratorium is a special circumstance disrupting the occupational way of life for many people in the community and it can also be considered as a cultural hiatus in the life of a community that relied on fishing and processing as the main economic activities; b) *gender identity and employment*: the unemployment and underemployment experienced by the people were strong influences in their daily discursive strategies at the time of the study. Kondo distinguishes between the parts of identities associated with paid employment and domestic work (usually unpaid); c) *diversity within*: the cod moratorium brought to the fore some of the discursive practices and transgressions of people testing the limits of local definitions of masculinity, femininity, and marriage. Men's studies provide the analytical space and tools to examine men's practices from a gender perspective, taking the term men to its social level, and ignoring the universality of the concept ascribed to it earlier (Mac an Ghail 1996: 61). And finally d) *decentralized knowledges*: this is an opportunity to show that, contrary to the common sense perception of rural communities, June's Cove is neither isolated from nor immune to the social trends of Canadian society. Knowledges of gender and their enactment come as a result of continuous interpretation, negotiation, rejection,

ambivalence, resistance and compliance with generally accepted norms. More detailed discussions of these issues appear in the following chapters. Chapter four examines marriage in light of the changes occurring in the community and elsewhere, and chapter five discusses changes in attitudes, notions and practices of masculinity and femininity.

This study is interested in examining the extent to which the fishery crisis is (if at all) affecting the gender identities of people living in fishing communities. In order to effectively use the model proposed by McNay and Foucault in this study, I substitute the ethics of the self in relation to sexuality with the ethics of the self as it relates to work. Also, instead of looking at moral religious codes, it will be necessary to consider codes embedded in the organization and the division of labour, family structures, marriage, and the social trends which might influence conventional views of gender within the community.

When considering June's Cove, a community where some experienced a dramatic breakdown in their main activity in that they were displaced from their paid work and where others were also affected to varying degrees, it is hard to imagine that traditional gender arrangements would be sustained in private or in public realms. But the fishery crisis was only one process that was impacting on these men and women at the time of the study. Other forces at work included changes in gender arrangements in the larger society supported by changing legal frameworks. The element of tradition is also important here because it is the depository of knowledge from the past, which is informing the present choices that individuals make as they break or transform traditions.

Traditional gender arrangements can be changed more rapidly in an enabling context, especially since identity (gendered and otherwise) is based in membership in a

given group. Thompson argues that, “the sense of oneself and the sense of belonging are both shaped – to varying degrees, depending on social context – by the values, beliefs and forms of behaviour which are transmitted from the past” (1996: 93). Therefore, for traditions to exist and continue to be passed on, they need to rest on social moorings, which are constituted by the group of individuals and the conditions that support the unity of that group (ibid: 89-95). He further argues that “[a]s traditions lose their hold in many spheres of social life, individuals are obligated increasingly to fall back on their own resources to construct a coherent identity for themselves” (ibid: 90). Individuals make choices out of present concerns, taking what is useful from the past and projecting themselves towards the future.

### **conclusions**

The framework presented in this chapter combines the knowledge, interrogations and musings from many disciplines and varied socio-political perspectives. Taken together, these can provide a broad lens to look at gender relations in June's Cove in the mid-1990s as men and women devised strategies to cope with changes brought about by the cod moratorium and other processes.

This framework rests on very fluid notions of gender (masculinities and femininities), and *unstable* notions of social institutions in order to capture the nuanced experiences of gender that test accepted social limits particularly as men and women negotiate their responsibilities and re-fashion their identities by interpreting elements of their tradition and larger social trends. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the attitudes and

behaviours of women and men in defining themselves and others; as well as their attitudes and practices in marriage.

### **Chapter 3**

## **Research Methods: re-searching the subjects in the process**

What one decides to study has methodological consequences.  
(Holstein and Gubrium, 1995: 73)

Gender identity processes take place through a series of never-completed inter-relational negotiations and relationships among members of a particular group/community. As indicated by Holstein and Gubrium (1995: 73), examining these processes has “methodological consequences.” In this chapter I examine the importance of methodological and theoretical congruence in conducting ethnography informed research on issues of gender identity. More specifically, I try to make explicit the connections between post-structural discourse analysis and qualitative methodology and their power to capture the diverse voices, and perspectives that shape (and re-shape) the complex tapestry of gender observed in June’s Cove. To do so, I lay out the methodological approach and the analytical tools used in this study, and I discuss two key methodological consequences that have influenced the research process: congruence of principles and positionality of the actors involved in the research process.

This study draws chiefly on post-structuralism for theoretical reference, as this approach offers new ways to conceptualize meaning, discourse, historicity, instability of signifiers and subjectivity. Similarly, I use qualitative methodologies because these are largely concerned with reaching beyond pre-set, fixed categories to make room for nuances and shades of meaning in dialogue, conversation and interpretative acts and behaviour thus creating space for the emergence of fluid notions and views. This, in my view, is the key point of congruence between the theoretical and methodological

principles. Also relevant to the congruence of principles is positionality, which for the purpose of this study I define as a political and relational process through which I, as the researcher, make an active effort to acknowledge the power relations existing between myself and the research subjects or between the research subjects themselves. My use of the concept positionality is largely informed by the work of reflexive anthropologists, sociologists, and feminist writers who, since the mid 1980s, have advanced concepts in an effort to critically reconfigure the epistemological map (See for instance: Clifford & Marcus 1986; Moore 1996).

This chapter is organized chronologically and it describes the research experience and interpretive processes as these unfolded. It looks at the various aspects of the research process such as: the qualitative approach; the selection of community and narrators, the research instruments, ethnographic observation/participation, ethical issues, the iterative process informing issues of positionality concerning the relationship between the researcher and the community, and finally some thoughts on reading and interpreting text, (the words) of narrators.

### **in the beginning...**

During my undergraduate years I was interested in gender issues and identity politics. I turned my attention to processes of gender and identity formation in rural Newfoundland as a result of my experience in Grand Manan Island (New Brunswick, Canada) and from a conversation about the consequences of the 1992 northern cod moratorium for peoples' lives.

In the summer of 1994, I had the opportunity to work as a volunteer for a project that Memorial University was carrying out with the local fishers on Grand Manan Island. The project was designed to test and find solutions to the incidental by-catch of harbour porpoise in gillnets. This collaborative work required researchers and volunteers to work side by side with fishers, sharing their schedules and their boats for the duration of the project. It was my first time in a fishing community and I found it to be very gender segregated. Women and men had separate spheres of activities. As researchers studying issues related to fishing, we worked daily with men and we would only see women (their partners, wives and families) on rare occasions. Women and children would come to the wharves to pick the men up after work and would board the vessels only for a pleasure trip. During these trips, the women usually played the role of care-giver and took responsibility for preparing and serving the food for all.

One afternoon, while working with a volunteer from Newfoundland I commented on the gender boundaries between fishers and their wives. She was not surprised by my comment. On the contrary, it seemed to confirm something she knew very well. She replied, "It is the same back-home." My next question was whether this socially segregated arrangement had changed or remained the same in the wake of the northern cod moratorium? She explained to me that she had not personally experienced the effects of the moratorium since she was in university and had not returned to her community often during that time.

I became intrigued by the events unfolding in Newfoundland. I wanted to know how men and women were negotiating spaces at home and in the community when the fishery was no longer providing a means for social and sex segregation. I was also

interested in changes in the gender attitudes and identities of men and women that might be occurring and the processes behind these changes. I wanted to catch a glimpse of the social impact that the moratorium had on these aspects of people's lives. I nursed these questions and the associated assumptions for a year before enrolling in the graduate program at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN).

### **who wants to know?**

I arrived at MUN to start my Master's studies in 1995. I had a clear focus in mind: to look at the gender identities of men and women in a small Newfoundland community. I saw this as an opportunity to conduct original research while pursuing an interesting sociological inquiry. However, an opportunity such as this one does not come without its challenges, as I later learned: choosing the research topic was only the beginning of a long journey in the production of meaning/knowledge.

One of the first challenges I faced had to do with my own positionality in respect to the context in which I had decided to conduct my research. Beyond the excitement of doing research, there was the realization that I was in a completely unfamiliar context with the self-imposed task of understanding and of speaking *about/for* women and men living in a small rural fishing community in Newfoundland. Speaking *on behalf of, for, and about others* is undoubtedly one of the privileges of academics and one I am familiar with as a woman from the South—an object of study *par excellence* in Anthropological, Sociological, Economic and Development fields. In my role as an academic, I needed to recognize my own positionality within academia as undertaking this research meant my

situation was shifting from **object** to **subject** of knowledge in the creation of the *other* or *studying them*.

Many academics from the North/West and South<sup>1</sup> have reflected on these issues. They have critiqued and questioned the location and directionality of knowledge and also expressed concern about where knowledge originates and about its objects. Amina Jamal (1994-5), for example, in her examination of the tensions and struggles that an “Eastern Other” faces when migrating to the West, urges us to consider the place our backgrounds have in the process of knowledge production and discourse. In doing so, she argues there are two options:

...to consider our racial/cultural backgrounds as interesting but a subsidiary aspect of our academic life or as one that undergirds the whole process of knowledge acquisition and production (Ibid: 39).

I chose the latter approach in recognition of my membership in the epistemological production centre (university student) and my condition as a female from the South (Ecuador), conducting research in Canada. Awareness of these two aspects of my positionality increased my understanding of my relationships with other academics and with those I had decided to make the focus of this research. I am keenly aware of the fact that I do not represent the *typical* researcher and thus, this research represented a singular experience for myself as researcher and, for the people in June’s Cove as the “*researched subjects*.” Some of the details of the relation(ship)s that emerged while conducting this research are integrated into the narrative of this thesis and especially into this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> S. Hall 1986; F. Fanon 1952; G. C. Spivak 1995; E. Said 1978; H. Bhabha ; Anthony Appiah ; H. Moore 1988, among others have paved the way for theorizing the presence of the Third world voice in the First/North.

### **the research process: 'approaching' the research study**

Positioning myself within the epistemological 'centres' described above increased my sensitivity and greatly influenced the approach adopted for this research. This approach involved an open-ended, multi-layered effort designed to ensure that processes of contestation, differentiation and nuanced dissent become evident through listening and by including diverse voices from June's Cove. 'I,' as the feminist researcher at the epistemological centre (academia), sought to recognize the 'epistemological agency' in the people in June's Cove as they constructed, contested and produced social meaning/knowledge. At every stage of the research process, starting from the proposal writing stage, to field work, to data analysis and thesis writing, I relied mainly on feminist and qualitative research methods because of their compatibility with this approach.

It is widely recognized that Feminist scholars have challenged and offered critical alternatives to the "dominant paradigms, methodological strictures and theoretical assumptions of the various disciplines" (Reinharz 1992: 3)<sup>2</sup>. They have argued that, "the strength of the women's movement lies in its ability to acknowledge 'serious disagreement' on topics including the feminist method" (Ibid: p 3). Similarly, post-structuralist theoretical principles aim at including unheard and dissenting voices and challenging meta-theories. These theoretical principles can be combined with qualitative methods and techniques to analyze issues of gender identity in men and women as they both are born out of the need to challenge positivistic approaches to knowing and

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<sup>2</sup> Feminists, for instance, have come to include and/or consider the dissenting voices, views and knowledge coming from sectors that base their efforts and struggles on issues of race, gender orientation, class, culture, ability, environment, etc. This has resulted in the pluralization of the Feminist movement(s).

meaning creation. Therein lies the advantage of this approach, as its very principles question the essence of social signifiers and their ability to adequately describe the lives of people. This is particularly important when looking at issues of gender<sup>3</sup>. The result is an impetus to question the bases of socialization and perception, for contestation, re-definition, interpretation and differentiation of marginal voices and narratives.

### **selecting the tools**

From the point of view of this approach, the production of knowledge and meaning involves an interpretive dialogue between the researcher and the narrators involved with the research project. Promoting dialogue necessitates the use of tools that allow for unobstructed observation and that provide the necessary space for narrators to tell their story. I was inspired by the works of feminists, post-structuralists, qualitative researchers and ethnographers and I adopted the following combination of tools and techniques from these schools of thought: **ethnography informed participant observation, field notes, and semi-structured open interviewing.**

Qualitative techniques and tools enable researchers to actively engage *the researched* in the research process and to include local voices and knowledge in it. To this end, the selection of the tools and techniques has to be complemented by a careful assessment of their limitations in order to minimize or avert some of the pitfalls of the process. Henrietta Moore (1996; 2-3) for instance, warns us of the dangers of “parochializing” knowledge in the process of making “all theories partial and local.” She

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed discussion on these issues see, P. Lather 1992; P. Hill 1990; Reinharz 1992; b. hooks 1984; L. Carty 1991.

insists that it is necessary to recognize the process by which truths, theories and knowledge become valid outside of their domains of origin.

Anthropologists for all their concern with local understandings and specificities, do not habitually view the people they work with as producers of social science theory as opposed to producers of local knowledge (Ibid: 3).

She also states that “[w]hat is sometimes implied in anthropological writing about local knowledges is that they constitute closed systems, in the sense that they are incapable of self-reflection and auto-critique”(ibid: 6). Auto-critique and self-reflection are often presented as something that “distinguishes traditional societies from modern ones” and, “without such auto-critique there is no knowledge, merely belief”(Ibid: 6). Conducting research from such a perspective takes away the epistemological power of local knowledges.

Moore’s reflection also points to some ways to avoid this pitfall. She takes note of works and “analytics” coming from the margins (metaphorically and physically) that, “have long emphasized the analytical and critical power of the eccentric perspective”(Ibid: 9). She argues for the need to take local knowledge to a new level and recognize it as a philosophy that holds comparative validity to explain the world (Ibid: 6). Thus, the selection of the tools for this research aimed at ensuring an epistemological place for all the actors involved, as well as for their truths and knowledges.

### **ethical issues (informed consent, archival depository)**

Another important step in conducting research is to meet the University’s ethical guidelines governing any research involving “human subjects.” To this end, I submitted my proposal and the forms I was planning to use in the research process to Memorial

University's Interdisciplinary Committee for Ethics in Human Research for review and approval (see Appendices 1, 2, 3, and 4). The chief ethical concern was the protection of integrity of the narrators at all times. Their participation in the research had to be free and voluntary, and they needed to be aware that they could stop and/or withdraw from the project at any time. Also, the information collected should not endanger or jeopardize their lives when published in any form (thesis, articles, etc). In consultation with my supervisor, I designed forms to obtain consent and archival release (see appendices 1 and 2). Narrators signed forms to give their informed, unrestricted and voluntary consent to be part of the research, and to decide what should happen to the taped interviews in the future, including archival deposit. I gave narrators assurances that I would protect their identities and not reveal the name of their community and that the information collected would only be used for this research. They also decided on what should happen to the tapes and transcripts from the interviews. No publication resulting from this study would bear the name of the place they call home, descriptions of any recognizable features or actual names of participants.<sup>4</sup>

### **ethnographic/participant observation**

The ethnographic component of the approach enabled me to interact with the people, become acquainted with the community, collect field notes and observe social patterns and daily activities. It also helped me to identify the different groups and their alliances; the power differentials among them; as well as, their perceptions of each other. These observations were crucial for the selection of the households/individuals for the other

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<sup>4</sup> In my notes and narrations, all the people I met will be referred to using pseudonyms to protect both their identity and integrity.

aspects of the research and in the formulation of the interview guide for the semi-structured interviews. I complemented information derived from ethnography with information from archival and library research.

### **selecting the community/study site**

After the proposal had been formulated and approved for implementation, I turned my attention to selecting the study site. I was interested in building upon (also qualifying) previous studies and findings and in contributing to efforts to understand issues of gender identity in the context of the moratorium. I sought the guidance and insights of my supervisor and other maritime sociologists. From my discussions with them and considering the objectives of the study, I concluded that it was necessary to focus on a community with a history of cod fishing but that also processed other species, and with a local processing plant. This would ensure a rich and very complex social setting with a multiplicity of voices and views. On the recommendation of officers at the Institute for Social and Economic Research, I decided to focus my research on the North East Coast of the Island. In choosing the community I ensured that the place was not the subject of other studies since I was afraid that people might be reluctant to participate in *yet another research* study about their lives.

With these issues in mind, I set out to learn about the communities in the area. On June 30th, equipped with a map, my husband and I drove along the coast to see the exact geographical location of the potential research sites. I chose June's Cove as the study site, since it met all the requirements in terms of size (approximately 550 people); it had a history of cod fishing and was affected by the moratorium; and had (still has) a

processing plant. The pseudonym came from the month when I visited (June) and Cove was in reference to its geographical set up (the community is nestled in a cove) which is also a natural descriptor for a Newfoundland outport.

We drove to June's Cove a second time, exploring the community from one end to the other. As we were driving, we stopped to talk to Karen and Joseph S (pseudonyms) who were enjoying the sun in their front yard. I introduced myself and my husband and I explained to them who I was and what I was planning to do. I also asked them where I could rent a room for the duration of my fieldwork. They were interested in research and recommended a few people who might have rooms for rent. They warned me that it was rare to find rooms for rent in the area: "we do not have many visitors around here, most people own their homes" said Karen.

At the end of our conversation we exchanged telephone numbers and I proceeded to check the places they recommended. A week later, I made another trip to the community to look at a summer-house that my supervisor had secured for me through a friend. During this trip, I visited Karen to let her know about the possible arrangement. A few days later, Karen called to offer me a room in her house. She had decided to let me board with them, as she thought that it was not appropriate for me to live on my own. When we met, she told me: "a woman should never be alone in a strange place." This was my first encounter with the gender rules of the community.

I was happy to be able to secure accommodation with a local family; it gave me a sense of approval and encouragement to carry out my ethnographic research. Living with a local family also gave me the opportunity to meet people, mingle with their friends and gain an inside perspective of the community's social dynamics. This greatly facilitated

the ethnographic observations and enabled me to keep records of events in the lives of individuals and the community.

### **here she comes**

The following week I moved into the S's house, which was to become my temporary home for the duration of my fieldwork. On the evening of my arrival, after dinner, we went for a walk through the town. As we walked, we met people on the street and my hosts introduced me to some of their friends. I realized that the news about my presence had quickly spread in the community. I was met with curiosity that quickly turned into kind hospitality, easing my apprehensions and anxieties.

Contrary to widespread conventions that suggest seeking the “sponsorship of higher ranking members” to provide entry into the community (Weiss 1994: 19), I had invited myself to June's Cove to conduct a research project about their lives. In fact, the entire research process had followed the same pattern, in that I had made every decision related to the project<sup>5</sup>: choice of community, research design, focus and research questions, etc.

### **getting to know the place**

I was anxious to meet authorities/leaders and member of the community to inform them about the project and to identify people who might participate in the study. I felt it was

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<sup>5</sup> Academics have the power to make most decisions related to the research process, and this is certainly a privilege, as noted earlier. Recognizing our privileges often leads to questioning our performance as researcher. In my case, this questioning led to sentiments of inadequacy, for which I could not prepare, despite my supervisor's warnings. Facing these sentiments was not altogether negative, but rather led to a process of reflection and enrichment through my own experiences.

important to formally present the research project and its objectives to the community. I asked my hosts to point me to the authorities. Karen and Joseph suggested names and provided phone number of individuals I could meet, including the Mayor, the Council members, the Secretary of the Council and the religious leaders. They also suggested that I present the research project to the Senior Citizens' Club at their next meeting. "They will give you more history, they know more," they said. I wanted to meet fishers and plant workers, and they provided names of fishers (men and women) and suggested that I meet the plant owner to seek permission to see the operations and meet the workers there.

In the weeks following my arrival, I began my field observations and started contacting the people my hosts had suggested to set up appointments and/or meetings. I met with the Secretary of the Municipal Council to inquire about the possibility of making a presentation to the whole Council at their next meeting. Unfortunately, the Council meetings were rather irregular or did not happen over the summer due to the lack of quorum. Most of the Council member held jobs at the plant with varying shifts and thus were not able to attend the meetings. Work in June's Cove is seasonal and therefore it is very important not to miss work. While I was not able to make my presentation to the whole Council I managed to talk to most of the members individually. I also built a good rapport with the Council's Secretary.

I made several attempts to visit the processing plant and make a presentation about the research to plant employees. My efforts did not bear fruit. The plant receptionist, with whom I corresponded and spoke on the phone, initially offered different reasons to deny my request. She suggested that plant work scheduling made it difficult to gather plant workers and that sanitary regulations prohibited access of non-staff in the

premises. I then asked to see the plant during down time. She was to consult with the owner and get back to me, but I never heard back from her. As a result, I relied on the descriptions of the plant presented by the narrators.

The Senior Citizens' Club welcomed my request to make a presentation about the research to its members at one of their meetings. They listened with interest and asked questions about the project and what I hoped to find with the research. They offered names of persons I could speak to.

Overall, many people in the community demonstrated great interest in the research. Their interest was connected to issues related to the cod moratorium and to other issues. In my initial meetings with contacts, I would explain that my research was to look at the 'impact of the moratorium on gender identities,' leading people to think that I was only interested in things related to the fishery. Thus, for some, the research objective was to assess the "impact of the moratorium and to make recommendations for improvement," to the government. For others, I was there to hear what the community had to say about the moratorium situation and "hopefully those people in Ottawa would know what is happening here." I was keenly aware of the potential for confusion and I took every opportunity to clarify the objectives of the research and to let people know that I had no affiliation to any government agency.

I complemented my findings from fieldwork and participant observation with information I obtained consulting libraries, census data (Statistics Canada), and other records (Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Human Resources and Development and Social Services) on the community. The TAGS officer for the area provided me with an anonymized list of beneficiaries that included the age, gender and

the TAGS program each person was involved in. I had requested a similar list from the President of the Union Local at the plant, however the union was not allowed to release any information due to confidentiality issues. A plant worker gave me a numeric and gender breakdown of active plant workers at the time of the study. I also gained access to anonymized records of people who had received government assistance from 1986 to 1996. From the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) I requested records of the community's fish landings from 1986 to 1996. Due to internal policies and restrictions, DFO was not able to release records of landings for June's Cove. They could only provide landings for the whole region. I requested the same information from the plant owners, but to no avail.

The different types of data were provided at different times and stages of the fieldwork. I used the data I collected to guide the design and development of the interview guide. These parallel processes conditioned my understanding of the community and challenged the assumptions I had brought with me.

### **structuring the interviews under the “field” influence**

“If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk with them?” Steinar Kvale (1996: 1) opens his book *Interviews*, with this question, using the metaphor of the researcher as a participant in the construction of stories that emerge while s/he engages in conversations with the ‘subjects.’ The basic premise behind his argument is that people constitute themselves and their worlds through everyday conversations (Ibid: 37). Thus, there is a need to engage in a dialogue with those we want to *know* more about and *write about*. For Kvale “[t]he qualitative research interview attempts to

understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (Ibid: 1).

During my first month in June's Cove, I developed the interview guide I later used to learn more about men's and women's views, concerns, opinions and perspectives. The final version of the interview guide (see appendix 3) reflected input from my supervisor combined with what I had learned about the community, and it was guided by my reading of qualitative literature<sup>6</sup>. The interview was structured in two sections: the first section (work experience, in the fishery, plant work, knowledge and skills, the fishery crisis and its impact, and the TAGS program) was concerned with learning about the occupational experience of narrators, their sense of identification with their occupation and the community and how this informed masculinity and femininity. It was also meant to elicit views on the moratorium and its effects on the community and themselves individually. This section had three variants to fit the three broad occupational categories I wanted to sample: fishers, plant workers and those who did not work "directly" in the fishery. The second section of the interview schedule (social and support network, household division of labour, gender questions, community involvement) dealt more directly with attitudes, values and perspectives of people related to their *gender identities, marriage, and work*, as well as the changes in the gender practices, associated with the moratorium and whether these changes were connected to the fishery crisis or were the result of larger social phenomena.

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<sup>6</sup> For the design of the interview guide and general consultation while on the field, I drew on works of: Reinharz 1992, Kvale 1996, Weiss 1994, Alasuutari 1995, Devault 1990, Douglas 1985, Fortier 1996, Glasser & Strauss 1967, Gluck & Patai 1991, Holstein & Gubrium 1995, Silverman 1993, Rubin & Rubin 1995, McCracken 1988.

Using the interview guide as a tool in active interviewing proved extremely useful. On the one hand, the interview guide became my road map during the conversations and allowed me to present the questions and themes in a consistent manner. On the other hand, I was able to engage with the narrators in their free explorations of areas not anticipated in the questionnaire, resulting in a far more active process of meaning production/creation. The interviews became social interactions that provided the narrators the space to explore aspects of life not usually articulated. At the end of a very long conversation with Wilma, she said to me “if you didn’t ask me, I wouldn’t have realized that I know all these things.” The interview had given her the opportunity to explore, articulate and create meaning through our interaction. As Holstein and Gubrium put it, “[r]espondents are not so much repositories of knowledge –treasuries of information awaiting excavation– as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers” (1995: 4).

It is important to recognize that “[t]he research interview is not a conversation between equal partners, because the researcher defines and controls the situation. The researcher defines the topic of the interview, introduces it and follows up on the narrator’s answers to his or her questions (Kvale 1996: 6). Nonetheless, interviews yield far better information than surveys where everything, including the answers, is predetermined. In fact, interviews lead to ‘detailed descriptions’ which enable the researcher to ‘integrate multiple perspectives,’ describe the research process, and to ‘bridge intersubjectivities’ (Weiss 1994: 9).

### **tape or no tape**

Before coming to June's Cove, I had decided to tape all my interviews. Making a taped recording of the interviews had some advantages: first, it allowed me to accurately capture the words, meanings and speech patterns of the narrators. Secondly, it minimized the distractions associated with note-taking and gave me the opportunity to pay more attention to our interaction and notice non-verbal communication, adding depth to the interview. And finally, taped interviews added texture to what could have potentially been a flattened, compressed version of their views and opinions. Well after the interviews were completed, listening to their words gave me the opportunity to gain insights into the local culture that reside in the everyday language used to convey particular meanings.

For the most part, people were comfortable with the interviews being taped. They were sensitive to my concern to represent their words and opinions accurately. Most of the narrators even agreed (some with excitement) to archiving the audio-tapes with the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA). They were pleased to know that there would be a record of their voices for posterity, and some also requested personal copies of the interview. However, taped interviews and speaking in front of a microphone were not for everyone. Some narrators declined to be part of the research and to be interviewed because of the tape-recorder. They expressed discomfort with the thought that there would be a record of their voices and opinions in addition to being frightened by the prospect of speaking into a microphone. Narrators had the option to stop and/or refuse to answer any question at any point during the interview and to decide what information was "for-the-record" and "off-the-record."

### defining and selecting narrators (formal and informal)

Before selecting the narrators for this research, it was very important to make explicit the terms I used to define them. In reviewing the literature, I found a long list of terms to describe ‘human research subjects’: “informants,” “respondents,” “participants,” “collaborators,” “subjects,” “interlocutors,” among others. I found most of these terms quite problematic. Each carried a political weight and signalled an uneven relationship between the writer/researcher and the narrator, where the narrator would lack agency/voice and the researcher would act as her/his mouthpiece. This seemed to suggest that the *narrator* would only acquire agency in the presence of the researcher.

Many sociologists and anthropologists have recognized and reflected on this problem<sup>7</sup>. Henrietta Moore, for example, stresses the need to address the politics of positionality and locations as a step in the process of recognizing the agency of those *we study* in order to break the Cartesian *cogito* that separates knowledge producers from those who are the subject of the research. Moore evaluates the critiques advanced by the “post-modernists, post-structuralists and/or deconstructionists” as they challenge the grand narratives, question the subject-object relations and invite us to “rethink alterity, and by extension subjectivity and collectivity” (1996: 2-4).

I made the ethical and political decision to name people in the community “narrators.” This decision not only recognizes them as constructors of knowledge and meaning with epistemological agency, but it also recognizes in them the story-tellers and

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<sup>7</sup> See for example Holstein & Gubrium 1995; Clifford & Marcus 1986; Clifford 1997; Marcus 1993; Gluck & Patai 1991; Spivak 1995.

interlocutors who recount their lives and experiences using their own articulations and narrations, beyond being merely the objects of my observations.

### *categories of narrators (sampling)*

The selection of narrators involved a process of negotiation between the assumptions I had brought with me, and what I later learned by living in June's Cove. From reading anthropological and sociological accounts, I understood a fishing community to be composed mainly of households belonging to fishers, plant workers, or non-fisher/plant workers. My initial intent was to interview *households* from each of these categories. However, after visiting several households I realized that households did not belong exclusively to one category. In the same household, I found people working in different sectors: the father in the fishery; the mother at the processing plant or at the store; and the children attending college or university, doing odd jobs in the community, or receiving social assistance. Similarly, individuals exhibited a very mobile occupational pattern, moving from fishing, to plant work, to sales in shops, to babysitting, etc. Consequently, I changed my sampling strategy from targeting households to *individuals* using the three broad categories.

The appropriateness of the three main categories was confirmed through my conversations with narrators in June's Cove, for whom the community was composed of two clear groups: people working directly in the fishery (fishing and processing) and those with occupations not directly related to the fishery. In their perception, between 70 and 90 percent of the people depended directly on the fishery (fishing and/or processing cod and/or crab). The rest, according to them and my observations, and excluding those

on social assistance, were carpenters, teachers, janitors, garbage collectors, office clerks, members of the clergy, church administrator, post office administrator, TAGS officers, plant managers, drivers, nurse aides, embalmers, security guards, upholstery, sales persons and shop keepers/owners.

Fishers could be further differentiated: according to the length of the boat in which they fished (45 footers: 7; 30 footers: 6; 10 footers: 10); according to the species they targeted (lobster, crab, cod, lump, capelin); according to their years of experience and gender; and according to whether they were active or inactive. Similarly plant workers were employed in different areas of the plant and at different jobs (carpentry, loading, processing, weighing, packing, shaking, washing, grading, cooking, butchering, filleting) and differed in terms of their gender, years of experience, the species they worked with, whether they were active or inactive.

I selected the people for the interviews using the three broad categories: fishers, plant worker and a group I initially referred to as non-fisher/plant worker. I eventually changed the name of this last group to “*others*<sup>8</sup>.” This term emerged during my interviews and conversations with narrators, especially those who did not see themselves as part of the fishery.

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<sup>8</sup> I realized that for them making this distinction was more than a linguistic exercise, it was an expression of their sense of alienation from the dominant category in the community. The linguistic/discourse weight of the ‘fishing community’ label was hard to escape given its predominance within the community. In his book, *Researching Culture*, Pertti Alasuutari calls this process ‘cultural distinction’ and defines it as “[the way] an individual or a text under scrutiny is conveying the story.” He indicates that “[d]ue to the systematic nature of language the meaning of an individual word is defined partly by all the other possible words it excludes” (1995: 62-68). In June’s Cove for instance, fishers and plant workers with a direct connection to the fishery become the defining feature of the community, a fishing community, and at the same time these very words also defined the ‘*others*’. Due to time constraints, I did not include in this thesis a longer discussion of membership and community identity. However, it is important as an issue for future research.

In selecting the narrators, I wanted to capture the diversity of marital status, age, and the three broad occupational categories present in the community and thus, narrators were married, single, divorced, common-law; ranged in age from late teens to early 80s; and were fishers, plant workers, or ‘others’. The selection is not representative in the conventional sense to yield generalizable findings for the larger population or a specific demographic sector. Rather, in keeping with the spirit of qualitative research, the sampling goal was to ensure the inclusion of as many different voices as possible, *vis-à-vis* the time and resources limiting the study.

### **cast of narrators**

Many people took time to share with me their lived experiences, opinions and views and to give me a glimpse of how they understood their gendered lives. There were twenty-three *formal* participants who formally agreed to be part of this research. The following is a list of the pseudonyms assigned to the narrators. They appear according to the order in which I interviewed them: Danielle (fisher), Albert (fisher), Louise (plant worker), Wilma (clerk), Sarah (plant worker), Judy (student), Corey (carpenter), Jeffrey (plant worker), Thomas (carpenter), Josephine (shop keeper), Mary Ann (independent business person), Gabrielle (teacher), Pauline (plant worker), Lavinia (plant worker), Michael (shop keeper), Peter (fisher), Elizabeth (plant worker), Bruce (retired-plant work), Steven (plant worker), Paula (plant worker), Russell (plant worker), Benjamin (unemployed), William (retired fisher).

Table 1: Number of narrators by age and work categories (men/women).

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#### **Categories**

Age Group	Fishers (men/women)	Plant (men/women)	Other (men/women)
60 - up	1/0	2/1	1/2
40 - 60	1/1	1/1	2/2
late-teens -35	1/0	1/1	2/3

Clustering narrators according to age groups reflects some of the social dynamics I observed. For instance, there were common activities among children of the same age that brought their parents together, providing an opportunity for friendships to arise. Another example is the Senior citizens club with activities organized for and by seniors. Gabrielle and other narrators told me “everybody is equal in the community, everybody gets along with everybody,” giving the impression of a homogeneous community. However, over time I came to identify various subgroups and some community divisions. For example, I had visited one family to ask if they might participate in the research. They declined politely, but agreed to speak to me informally. Two days later, I met them on the street as I was coming out of the store with Karen (my host). I greeted them with anticipation, but to my surprise, my smile was met by a faint wave of the hand. I sensed that they did not want my host to see us interact. I suspected that they did not belong to the same social group, and the incident confirmed it. The subtleties of the divisions became more and more apparent as time went on. For this reason I desisted from organizing group meetings for discussions. I did not want to antagonize any one group, as I felt that some people would not participate to the same degree in the presence of others.

Participants were selected using a snowball sample technique in part to satisfy the categories. I conducted twenty-three formal semi-structured interviews, and I had continuous contact, conversations, and discussions with approximately twenty additional

people, including the local civil authorities (mayor and town council members) and religious church leaders, who shared their views and opinions on some of the issues this thesis deals with. My interactions with everyone in the community contributed in a direct or indirect way to my understanding of the issues.

### **data collection/ interview process**

Doing fieldwork in general, and conducting interviews in particular, involves a process of continuous learning. The learning occurs at different levels (personally, intellectually, conceptually, and methodologically) and shapes the final product, its parts and the researcher's thinking. As the researcher's thinking gets reshaped, assumptions are challenged, and the folds of the research topic become exposed affecting future research activities. Constant reflection, growth and the careful consideration of various aspects of the research, and deciding how to deal with them become vital parts of this iterative learning process. In the following pages, I want to reflect on my experience conducting field research, the various challenges faced, mechanisms I used to defuse my fears, anxieties, doubts; and the mechanics of the research itself including the reactions of people I met to me and to the research. I will also consider some of the areas that were improved as a result of this learning.

The first step involved in setting up an interview was to contact the person in order to explain to her/him the objectives of the research and request their participation. These initial contacts were sometimes awkward, especially when done over the phone. I much preferred face-to-face interactions so that I could give and receive non-verbal feedback. Meeting narrators in person was a far richer experience and in most cases I met

them through someone else. I had better interactions with narrators I was directly introduced to, than with those I met through remote recommendation.

The process of interviewing the narrators was a personal challenge, and I had to overcome my intense fear of being misunderstood because of my accent, or worse yet, of not understanding people's dialect and the special accent of the region. To gain insights on the local enunciations, articulations and dialectic expressions, I read books, watched movies and consulted other sources. Initially, I opted to adhere almost rigidly to the interview guide for fear of not covering all the topics. Some times my preoccupation with gesticulating and articulating clearly pre-empted my ability to concentrate and follow up on small details of the conversation. However, as time went on, I grew more confident in my interviewing abilities and found it easier to explore leads and cues not anticipated in my questionnaire, thus enriching the interview.

My growing comfort with interviewing came from writing and reading the field notes taken after each interview and period of observation. I did not have a chance to listen to my interviews while in the field given my shared living arrangements. At that time, protecting the confidentiality of the material was more important than listening or reviewing the interviews. Nonetheless, I did learn to feel at ease while interviewing and this changed the interview process from a polite exchange to a conversation characterized by a good rapport, positive feeling, comfort, common mutual intellectual curiosity, and mutual respect.

Most of the interviews were conducted in the narrators' homes. I tried to meet the narrators alone to ensure minimal or no interruptions and privacy and to avoid the incidental arrival of a family member. Few narrators spoke to me in front of family

members (by accident or design), and I felt that when family were present, narrators' stories were greatly influenced by their presence. Side comments made by the narrators would confirm this. On some occasions, the presence of a family member seemed to encourage the narrator to talk more and demonstrate their knowledge. I saw this reaction mainly among some men. The power differential between men and women and the enabling and/or constraining effect family members have on each other became evident.

From July to October, my conversations with twenty-three people, the formal narrators, yielded over 55 hours of taped narrative. Most interviews were followed by hours of conversation, chatter, questions, comments, tea and biscuits. This was the time to learn more about each other, and to talk about many things including the subjects covered in the interview. On some occasions, I was asked to put the tape-recorder back on to add a point that had escaped them before. This was also the time to ask me questions about my place of origin, why I had decided to come and study in Newfoundland; where I had been before, where I was going; and, the question *de rigueur*, whether or not I intended to stay in Newfoundland or to go back home. I was always reminded of my status as an outsider, a welcomed visitor. These interactions, which went beyond the formal contract of the interview, provided me with insights into the ways in which the 'other' is constructed in this context. This experience also brought to bear a number of aspects that deserve some consideration, such as *neutrality, naïveté, gender, returning the gaze and unanticipated consequences of my presence.*

### neutrality and naïveté of the outsider

Discussions about the researcher's neutrality and naïveté are vast and views on the issues vary across the spectrum. My thinking coincides with some feminists who "reject... the hierarchical, objectifying, and falsely 'objective' stance of the neutral, impersonal interviewer as neither possible nor desirable, arguing that meaningful and feminist research depends instead on empathy and mutuality" (Stacey 1991: 112). But at the same time, I did not feel that it was my job to bring "feminist enlightenment" to women and men in June's Cove. And therefore, I decided to adopt a more "neutral" approach during my fieldwork. This decision was not intended to hide my ideological position and principles, instead it was meant to: a) to create an open space where narrators could express their opinions and views freely, without feeling judged or influenced by a feminist; and, b) keep the communication lines open to everyone including those who might strongly disagree with what feminism(s) stand for. It was very important to include all views and opinions.

I have a strong suspicion that the people in June's Cove spoke to me as a feminist partly because of the focus of the research, and my insistence on speaking to female fishers among others. In my conversation with Jeffrey for instance, he would qualify his sentences and views about the jobs that men or women can do by saying:

J: ...There is jobs suited more for men. It's sexist yes, but [laughter]. You're gonna think of me, 'what an asshole!' But, that's just the way I sees things (JA male 24: 30)<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Format used to cite narrations: initials, sex and age followed by page numbers where quotes are found in the interview transcript. E.g. Jeffrey A appears (JA male 24: pp)

Jeffrey's statements denote an awareness of me not only as a female listener, but also as a feminist listener. All the same, he felt free to express his opinion and the way he saw things. And this was the type of dialogue I wanted to have with them, open and unencumbered by our personal biases. My role was not to judge their opinions, but rather to learn about them and understand them so I could make sense of their world.

Further, I was trying to remain impartial among the various groups in the community. I was in contact with people from groups representing different interests who sometimes displayed antagonistic sentiments towards other groups. I could not avoid being associated with the group my hosts belonged to, but I did not want to be caught in the cross-fire or have people from different groups compete for my allegiance. I had to make sure that they knew that I was there to learn from them, irrespective of what group they belonged to.

As an outsider, I was able to draw on what I refer to as naïveté. This afforded me some license to cross the lines from group to group and to ask many questions about other events and who was who in the community and still maintain a tenable position as a researcher. In many other cases, this would have been seen as a breach of the local customs. I found people very receptive to my inquiries and open with their personal stories and stories about others. I would like to propose two reasons for this openness: a) as a stranger I did not pose a threat in their lives since I do not belong to the group their livelihood depends on; b) many people saw the study as one chance to vent and express their feelings and views or simply to tell their stories.

I was not entirely free to breach the local norms. For instance my marital status determined my image in the community and the type of behaviour expected of me, as

well as the sort of social life I was entitled to. Karen, my host, on my first night at her house, told me that since I was married, I did not need nightlife. Personally, I was relieved to hear that, I do not like clubs and bars and this way I did not have to deal with the social pressure of going out. The only drawback was that I did not get to see interactions among men and women in that particular setting, which would have been interesting. But, I was a self-invited guest and as such I was prepared to conform to her rules and norms.

I did have the opportunity to share other aspects of social life. For example, I watched TV programs with my family and sometimes with the other narrators I met. “The story” as soap operas are referred to, is a good topic of conversation. I participated and shared in many activities with the people I met: I went to the “cove” where people of all ages enjoyed their Summer in the water, I went berry picking and moose-hunting, I cooked fresh crab and I also visited and attended celebrations of friends and relatives of my host family, etc.

### **“returning the gaze”<sup>10</sup> – reactions to the researcher & consequences**

Ethnographic fieldwork depends greatly on human interaction and the relationships developed between the researcher and the people who are the focus of the study. These relationships cannot escape social mediation and valuation. In June’s Cove education is highly valued and in many cases it was viewed as the ticket out of the community. As a university student researcher I drew a lot of attention from the people in June's Cove; they

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<sup>10</sup> I borrowed this phrase from bell hooks who uses it to illustrate the power of those on the other side of the microscope.

“returned the gaze.” They wanted to know about my life as much as I wanted to know about theirs. They were very interested in my education. In their mind, education bestows any person with the authority usually accorded to men or elders –those who have knowledge.

Having an education and knowing about it is also very important. This became apparent to me the day Karen introduced me to Corey, Sarah and Rose. As part of my introduction I was explaining to them that the research was part of my master’s degree. Corey seized the opportunity to impress the women present remarking “I know what a master’s degree is. That is what you do after you finish the first four years of university, right?” “Tell them I’m correct, tell them I know what I’m talking about!” he urged me. The women looked at him with a mixture of awe and scepticism in their eyes. Situations like this occurred with relative frequency, where the men asserted their superiority through showing their knowledge. It also suggested to me that men saw educated women as someone with whom they could engage in discussions that their women usually would not entertain. As such, I was expected to engage in discussions with men in matters such as those related to political, economic and social problems, especially those linked to the fishery crisis and its management.

My interactions with women in June’s Cove were varied and for the most part characterized by the expectation that as a woman I would understand how a woman feels. Jeffrey’s mother, for instance, would compare the pain of seeing her children leave town to mine as she saw me being far away from my family for so long. At the same time, other women drew comfort from looking at my situation: “You always find nice people

anywhere you go.” They used me as an example to encourage their children to go to university or to look for work outside the community.

Meeting and interacting with people in social situations enabled me to learn a great deal about life in June’s Cove, but this very opportunity became a trap. I could never escape my role as a researcher and took every occasion to “observe.” The quandary was what information was to become part of my report, what I would leave out, and also what would be the criteria for selection. All the information I collected, be it through formal interviews or by observation has shaped what I know and understand about June's Cove. And as such, I want to include as much information as possible in this thesis. I have found no way to resolve this dilemma.

For the moment, I am including as much information as possible without compromising the integrity of the people or situations that generated the information. Nonetheless, I am certain that narrators spoke to me knowing that I would report on their words and views. As Holstein and Gubrium (1995) remind us:

Story tellers draw on their audience too. Their accounts are assembled responsively, in something of a give-and-take with listeners, delivering something of what the audience wants to hear as much as recounting that which merely awaits telling (28).

Many of the narrators asked me if their contributions were useful: “Did you get what you were looking for?”; “Will you use what I said in your thesis?” Our conversations were an opportunity both to help me with the research and to tell their story.

The social character of active interviewing allows for the process of meaning production/creation to happen and it is built mainly on mutual trust between the interviewer and the narrators. Building relationships based on trust with narrators is

certainly positive from the point of view of the researcher, but it can also have unintended consequences in that "...field-workers can and do form valuable relationships with many of those whom we study, and some of our unsolicited interventions into the lives of our informants are constructive and deeply appreciated" (Stacey 1991: 117). A long time after I finished my fieldwork, I received a letter from Danielle who writes:

I have to thank you personally for making me a stronger person through doing that interview. Since then I've been on CBC radio - Fisheries Broadcast and I never could have done that before. I had to let everyone know how angry I was because we weren't allowed to have a food fishery. Oh well! I felt a little better blowing up my top. Ha! (Personal communication 1998).

Later in the same year, I received another letter where she told me: "I'm working now and guess what I am doing? "Surveys", yes for ... community development and "DFO." I have to thank you once again for giving me the incentive to do this. It's for 14 wks... I'm not that shy anymore. Ha!" (Danielle 1998, personal communication). Danielle's letters are just a sample of the letters that I have received and exchanged with the people in June's Cove.

### **text/act represented: transcribing narrations**

My time in June's Cove allowed me to capture a snap-shot of the lives of a few individuals as they faced the social, ecological and economic changes brought by decline of ground-fish along their coasts and the closure of the cod fishery. Once my fieldwork was completed, I went back to university eager to transcribe what I had learned onto paper (or screen). The task was as exciting as it was daunting, I had collected over fifty-five hours of taped conversations, and I had pages and pages of field notes with my observations, thoughts and ideas. All this material had to be processed in an intelligible

way for analysis and eventual writing of this thesis. I wanted to capture every detail possible, and thus every meeting and conversation I had, every home I visited, every narration (formal and informal) and together, these loose, differently shaped pieces had to come together to provide a complete image of a very textured context where men and women lived their gendered lives. Unfortunately, linear text is too flat to do justice to such a rich setting; the nuances of the non-verbal cues are levelled to fit the text.

My first step was to transcribe the interviews using their own words. I wanted to represent their pronunciation as close as possible, and I did not want to change their voices, even though their narratives may be perceived as breaking the grammatical rules of Standard English. I used Bernice Morgan's book, *Random Passage* (1992), as a guide to represent the dialect that I encountered in June's Cove. In addition, I used onomatopoeic words to denote and capture sounds that form part of regular speech such as "Mhm, mhm," "Uh huh," and other exclamations. Square brackets were used to highlight emotions, or emphasis of any given articulation. The ellipsis [...] denotes natural speech pauses, or transitions made by narrators from one thought to another.

The process of transcription was rich and long. Listening to the interviews allowed me to relive the interview moments and remember details about the conversations, which were added to the field notes. The analysis of such a large amount of data seemed like an insurmountable task and I shied away from it. The process was further complicated by the sociological protocols, which did not neatly match the theoretical perspectives informing my research. There was no guide or recipe to follow. A combination of time, reading and re-reading of interviews and other materials eventually

provided the necessary answers to making creative use of qualitative tools for data analysis.

Two books proved to be extremely useful in my search for the most adequate method to analyze the narratives I had collected. *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies* by Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson (1996) and *Learning from strangers: the art and method of qualitative interview studies* by Robert S. Weiss (1994). Their approach goes beyond coding the data (which I had initially done with the aid of a computer program). Using examples of their own work, the authors demonstrate the process of exposing the many layers that make up narratives and stories.

### **looking for clues, stories, and relationships**

The collection of stories and narratives was sorted into units according to narrator, containing all field notes and information to complete the profile of each person. On the first read of the interviews and notes, I looked for clues and themes that could begin to shape a picture of how men and women were enacting their gendered lives. From my recollections of the interviews, I could see common stories and narratives emerging. However, I needed to read and re-read (as well as listen to) all of the interviews many more times before getting past the surface layer. Slowly, as the layers peeled off, I began to see patterns in the narratives that positioned the narrators in the community, clarifying their relationships to others. I also began to hear their views on gender issues, gender practices; their attitudes towards housework, marriage, co-habitation, gender “roles;” the referents they used to shape their notions of gender, partner selection, ideals of men and women; and their understanding of the changes in the community, conceptions of private

and public spheres/spaces, the culture of individualism, sense of privacy, membership in the 'fishing community'. Similarities and differences became obvious, storylines and common views would cut across age and gender groups.

The local story began to emerge and it later became necessary to contextualize it in the events taking place in the province and the country at the same time. Qualitative methods/approaches provided me with a flexible framework within which I as the researcher and the narrators can create, interpret and understand meaning and patterns in social behaviour and peel off the layers of gender identity as they form. Their voices and their interpretations provided me with the context and the text for my discourse/narrative analysis to qualify previous findings and underlying assumptions. Building on previous knowledge and qualifying is consistent with the spirit of feminist research. Reinharz views this as:

...dialectical processes whereby former solutions become current problems. These controversies suggest that feminist researchers develop ideas by criticizing the status quo, then criticize the critique, then criticize the critique, or search for a synthesis that will itself be criticized (1992: 240-241).

As noted earlier, the aim of this study is raise questions about the notions of femininity and masculinity and referents used for gender identity formation as viewed, presented and enacted by the men and women of June's Cove in the context of the northern cod moratorium. The narratives collected in June's Cove confirm and contest the gender portrayals of people living in small fishing communities in Newfoundland found in the literature. The data I gathered provide new clues built on old stories that show alternate relationships between and among men and women. My intention is not to provide the answer to all the questions that preoccupy academics interested in the fishery

crisis in Newfoundland, but rather I would like to offer an alternative reading of the old and new text/stories/narratives. For this I have relied on methodologies and theoretical perspectives that allow for open and fluid formulations and notions of gender identity and social practices. The next chapter explores the gendered lives of men and women in June's Cove, the ongoing processes of identity, discourse and meaning making.

## Chapter 4

### Marriage and family: meaning, values and ideals

Mary Bundle and Ned Andrews are stark, staring naked and ... dive into a pile of bedding and cover themselves. ... Meg marches over ... to stand above the two lovers ... and proceeds in her clear voice, ... “Never! Not in all me born days did I see such a display—no better than two cats. I vow I’m ashamed of me life that such a thing could happen in this house! Do you think then, just because we’re livin’ in the back of beyond, that you can act like heathen? Do ye think that the Good Lord can’t see us? He can! ... I’ll not have you lyin’ in sin in the same room as them children! ... I’m that vexed I got a mind to chase both of you out like you is—you’ll be married in the eyes of God and man afore you shares this bed again!”  
(*Random Passage*, Bernice Morgan 1991, 79-80)

Marriage is one of the *most gendered* sites in society. It has been and continues to be the most accepted relationship between a man and a woman. As a socially sanctioned organizing mechanism, marriage regulates behaviours, attitudes and practices of reproduction, sexuality and, by extension, the gender identity of individuals. “It is also a [social] relationship defined by legal, moral, [religious] and conventional assumptions” (Nock 1998: 11). Individuals enter the matrimonial institution as *gendered entities* and often they do so in full compliance with society’s definitions and expectations of gendered roles and responsibilities. At the same time, marriage is a socio-political site for the interplay between society’s definitions and interpretations, innovations, negotiations and contestations, many of which shape its meaning and practices today.

This chapter examines the notions, attitudes and practices of partner selection, marriage, cohabitation and family presented to me by the women and men of June's Cove in the mid-1990s. Through an examination of processes of understanding, interpretation, contestation and meaning creation with special attention to marital discursive strategies,

the chapter shows: a) that the gendered actions of women and men in June's Cove are adaptive interpretations of local and outside codes and values which form part of a long process that simultaneously preserves and changes the meaning of marriage; and, b) that while changes to marriage in June's Cove are part of, and influenced by larger social trends in Canadian society, these changes also offer new sites/spaces and mechanisms for coping with the new circumstances brought about by the northern cod moratorium.

The analysis and discussion of the practices of marriage, and especially the gender relationships in which this is based, are situated in the context of the moratorium in order to historicize events and processes that are subject to multiple influences, local socio-economic situation, and the larger social trends in Canadian society. This analysis does not suggest a causal relationship between the changes in marriage and the moratorium.

Using narrators' accounts, I trace the discursive strategies and patterns of negotiations of married and un-married individuals as they redefine the institution of marriage. The analysis focuses primarily on the perceptions, expectations, and social and individual notions of the traditional and contemporary marriage; the construction of the self as a participant in marriage; the shifts in meaning of marriage/family; and the social currents influencing this shift in June's Cove. The basic premise in this analysis is the mutual conditioning existing between individuals and the social context in which they live.

### **the marriage question: perceptions, practices and realities**

The conventional script goes something like this: girl meets boy; they fall in love, they decide to get married and live together; and during the wedding ceremony, they promise

to love and support one another until the end of their days. This script represents the fairy-tale, *ideal* marriage. Nonetheless, this is the definition of marriage most commonly found in public discourse. This definition confines the meaning of marriage to the lawful union of a man and a woman with the associated moral and social obligations and it excludes other familial and conjugal arrangements, such as heterosexual and same-sex common-law unions or cohabitations. Canadian public discourse on marriage exhibits the legal, religious values of Western history. A report on “Marriage and conjugal life in Canada” notes that:

“in Canadian Law, we can trace the contributions of three very old legal systems. From Roman matrimonial law ... we retained monogamous marriages with spousal consent.... From Canon law ... we retained the prohibition of marriage between two close relatives, and the introduction of the ecclesiastical marriage. In the Catholic religion since 1184, marriage has been a sacrament that cannot be dissolved by the spouses, even after physical separation. Secular law ... introduced the concept of marriage as a civil contract between two parties. This concept was also shared by Protestant law which later allowed divorce and civil marriage. These basics of marriage law were already endorsed by French and English law when Canada was colonized by the first European settlers. (Dumas and Peron 1992: 5)

The conventional understanding of marriage defines it as the basis upon which a family is built. As such, marriage has six dimensions: it is a ‘free and personal choice;’ it is based on love; it requires certain maturity; it is a heterosexual relationship; the husband is the ‘head and principal earner;’ both parties expect sexual fidelity and monogamy; and it typically involves children (adapted from Nock 1992: 6). It is under these conditions that people build and share life with their family, enjoying thus the benefits of family life.

The prospects of family benefits may be the reason why some individuals opt for marriage. Among the most cited benefits of marriage are happiness, economic and social support, more regular sex life (Collins 1985: 35); the prospect of descendants, the

comforts and pleasures of married life, legitimacy (Foucault 1988: 151-154); security, companionship, lifelong commitment, erotic attraction and altruism (Nock 1998: 26). Marriage is also seen as a way to build *social capital* in the form of kinship networks and relations who can assist the individual in time of need (Nock 1998: 12-13). However, research also suggests that, “just being married appears to be more beneficial to men than to women, whereas the *quality* of the actual marriage appears to be more important to wives than husbands” (ibid: 14).

Conventional views of marriage tend to restrict most of its benefits to monogamous, heterosexual, lawful unions, thus turning marriage into an institutional regulating power of sexuality and gender roles. As an institution, marriage is also meant to determine the acceptable conditions under which reproduction/procreation for the preservation of society. However, conventional views and definitions of marriage are based on the idealized values of a given society, and do not always reflect actual practices. Underlying conventional views are assumptions about the functions and the benefits of marriage as a social institution and as a regulating strategy of sexual behaviours, practices of reproduction and gender identity. However, people interpret values and canons, and comply with them in creative ways and to varying degrees.

Notions and views on marriage have changed significantly in the last century. Challenges and contestations have come from diverse corners of society in an effort to extend the benefits of marriage to those already engaged in it through the introduction of legislation to protect women and promote equality, as with divorce laws (Hamilton 1988: 14-17; Dumas & Peron 1992); and to include those who live in “alternative” familial arrangements, through the extension of spousal benefits for common-law and gay couples

(Baker 2001: 33). Many gains have been made, many more are still outstanding; however, there is a higher degree of tolerance and to a large extent, acceptance of “alternative family forms and reproductive arrangements” (Coontz 1992; Baker 2001; Nock 1998).

The notions and views on unions and marriage change continually and as they change they push the boundaries around the legal frameworks, sociological theory and advocacy work that inform them. One such instance comes from the work and legal battles won by EGALÉ on issues concerning the rights of gays and lesbians.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, sociological fields have taken up some of the debate on the legal rights of same-sex couples. With the growth of Feminism, Queer Theory, Gender and Men Studies into full-fledged socio-political fields, combined with rising rates of separation and divorce, rise in births ‘out-of-wedlock’, declining fertility, and marriage going out of fashion (Baker 2001: 11-25), mainstream Sociology came to realize that marriage as a sociological unit of analysis had become increasingly inadequate to describe or capture the realities of contemporary marriages, families and unions. Some researchers expressed concern for marriage as an institution in decline, while others grappled to find broader concepts and definitions to encompass caring relationships and other familial models. The terms ‘families’<sup>2</sup> (in the plural) and ‘household’ have come to replace the term marriage in order to open its definitional capabilities and to capture alternative arrangements, such as

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<sup>1</sup> The legal bodies have relented to lobbying and pressure from organized groups such as EGALÉ and granted gay unions all the legal rights and obligations of marriage- including access to adoption and artificial insemination. On September 6, 2002, a Quebec Court declared the opposite-sex definition of marriage unconstitutional and gave Parliament two years to make the necessary changes. Taken from EGALÉ website on April 25, 2003. <http://www.islandnet.com/~egale/pressrel/020907.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Feminists put forth the use of the term family in research and advocacy to challenge the romantic notions and to enhance the pursuit of equality. See for instance: Eichler 1986, 2001; Mandell & Duffy 1988; Baker 2001.

cohabitation, remarriage, same-sex and heterosexual marriages. It has been necessary to add qualifiers such as same-sex, lesbian and gay, in order to clarify usages and specific situations, as their ability to convey broader meanings and nuances is still limited.

### **marriage in June's Cove**

Marriage contestations in June's Cove do not generally involve a total rejection of marriage as a social institution, but rather an expansion of its meaning and boundaries to reflect larger social trends and changing social and economic realities. The following discussion focuses on the discursive strategies adopted and used by women and men in June's Cove to contest pre-defined notions and enact new meanings of marriage in the context of the cod moratorium. The data informing this study present the negotiations and strategies of individuals engaged in (or with plans to be part of) a heterosexual relationship. In this discussion, I use the terms 'family' and 'marriage' interchangeably to connote the union of a man and a woman and if applicable, their children. Marriage emerged as a theme during my conversations with women and men about gender relations, housework and values.

Marriage is and continues to be an important institution in June's Cove. It has changed over time, and in its present forms, it reflects the notions and conventions of larger Canadian society. In the context of the moratorium, these changes offered women and men in June's Cove the flexibility to apply adaptive mechanisms to cope with the social and economic pressures brought about by the fishery crisis. This does not imply a unique and direct causal link between the moratorium and the changes in marriages, but rather the moratorium is the context for these interpretations which are made within their

lived realities and according to local values. To better understand the changes, it is necessary to consider how the meaning of marriage has changed over time in Newfoundland at large and in June's Cove in particular.

### *alliance for survival*

For Newfoundland's early settlers, life in the outports was characterized by hard labour in inhospitable conditions, individuals relied on the support of families and the community for their survival (Sinclair 1988, Porter 1993). Men and boys fished and sealed away from home in summer and winter months, while women were in charge of most of the work on "shore" (Porter 1993). They were responsible for providing food from their small gardens, tending the animals, making clothing and processing the fish for the market (Porter 1993; Davis 1983). Women's work was not only complementary (Porter 1993, Davis 1993), but crucial to family survival in times where their labour was exchanged for credit with the merchants. It was important to ensure good work since only the "best quality fish could fetch the highest prices on a merchant's account book [...] and only the most careful cultivation could ensure that families would have as little food as possible on credit for their winter supply. Fishermen depended on their female relatives for their families' survival" (Cadigan 1995: 52). Marriage was a means for survival that involved the coordinated work of the spouses to ensure their continued existence in fishing outports. It also legitimized families. And, as an institution, marriage was protected behind the religious, moral and social walls Europeans brought along with them. Within these walls, marriage was defined as an institution for life.

Historians report that according to the social norms of the time spouses were expected to stay together sustaining a marriage irrespective of its quality and in many cases, perpetuating unhealthy and violent situations. Separation and breaking-up the family were frowned upon and discouraged (Dumas & Peron 1992; Cadigan 1995). Abandoning the marriage often resulted in isolation, poverty and rejection, and the loss of a social support network in the community in times of need, particularly for women (Cadigan 1995: 52-56). Thus, separation was not a strategic option. Social and economic pressures accentuated the interdependence of women and men in the region who remained together *'through thick and thin'* to survive.

*through thick and thin, but...*

The research in June's Cove revealed that old precepts and moral codes surrounding marriage survive as we can hear in Wilma's comment.

My idea of marriage? Ah, personally? To me, marriage was instituted by God, to have children, so I think that's the way that marriage, that you know, that two people meet and whatever, fall in love [laughter] whatever and get married. And I guess maybe it's a fairy tale maybe in some cases. But maybe not. You know. I mean I really believe that marriage is instituted by God and God has given you the family as a unit. If you don't have a family, you're just going to all ends of the earth and you've got no roots, sort of thing, for raising children and having a home (Wilma Os female 57: 32).

These concepts have to coexist with new notions and family models as conditions have changed. Although these new notions of marriage and family models still have elements of past values, old values have taken different shape and weight. Jeffrey, a single young man who was engaged to marry, described marriage in the following way:

JA: ... Years ago, like, if she was good at saltin' fish, she was a good woman to marry. And, if she was good to make fish and saltin' when he comes in, she was a good woman to marry. ... And now it's ninety percent looks. That's all it is now.

Ten percent personality. That's why there's so many divorces on the go. People don't marry because they're in love or not. They gets married because it's a thing to do, more than anything. People that are going out for six months, and gets married; three months and gets married. And *it* [the marriage] lasts about as long as they're goin' out.

SC: So what, do you think, was the foundation of marriage then that's different from today?

JA: Survival. [slight laugh] They married to survive.

SC: Yeah? So, people were looking for, a companion for survival as opposed to...

JA: Yeah. Yeah.

SC: And what is it, that people look for, today?

JA: [laugh] Ah, sex. Well it's still companionship, but it's not like... You knows, you're gonna survive, even if you ain't gotta go to work. You get married now, have a couple of youngsters, sit down and live off welfare the rest of your life (JA, male 24: 33-34).

Jeffrey's description brings into sharp view past and present discursive strategies and changes in the meaning of marriage, including its conception and function. His statement also provides valuable insights into the attitudinal changes of individuals towards marriage in his community. But beyond the temporal contrast, his description also points to two important analytical issues that lie at the core of the acts of individuals in a social context: interpretation and contestation of social institutions through their individual practices. Interpreted acts and practices stretch the definitions of the institutions through enactment that differ from the norms which are contextualized in a particular historical and social moment—June's Cove during cod moratorium times.

People in June's Cove continue to get married. In fact, during my short stay in the community, there were over six weddings, a very common situation for the summer time according to the narrators. The national census confirms the statements at the community and provincial level. A report released by The Health Statistics Division of Statistics Canada in February 2003 shows a national increase of 1.9% in the number marriages for

1999, a change in the declining trend since 1995. The most significant increase, 7.9 percent, came from Newfoundland, the highest of all provinces<sup>3</sup>.

For many, marriage is a formality or a means to legitimize their union in the eyes of the community. For Steven S (23: 28-39) for instance, a decision to marry the mother of his 4-year old child came after they had cohabited for over five years. Everyone in town knew and recognized their union, and the wedding made it more formal. I was referred to him when I expressed my interest in meeting and interviewing someone living common-law. I met with him after the wedding to avoid disrupting the preparations. He was looking after his child as we taped the interview. He told me that he was very happy to have finally taken the step (to marry) to be able to provide his child a home. At the time of the interview, he was unemployed and his wife was undergoing training as part of the TAGS program.

Regardless of what motivates people to marry or to live common-law, marriage has changed as individuals enact their own interpretation of the notions of marriage handed down to them by society. Josephine B, a 64 year old woman, who had been married for over 45 years, for instance said “marriage is not the same as before ... In the past, maybe people were being divorced then and you didn't hear about it. But it seems to be an awful lot of separation and divorced cases now, I don't know why?” I asked her what she thought was the reason for the increased break-ups, and what was so different between then and now. She explained:

it seems like, you know, they [women] don't put up with too much now. If they can't get what they want or what they expect to get, you know it seems like they're

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<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada (March 2003) at: <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/famili.htm#mar>

not going to put up with anything. As long as you can't give me what I want, well that's it" (JB, female 64: 11-12).

In her mind, women's expectations have changed the meaning of marriage from a lifelong institution to a flexible arrangement of the opt-out brand.

Researches have argued that the increased participation of women in the labour market, with all its problems, has changed the economy of marriage (dual-income enterprise) and their position within it (from dependent to co-provider) (Baker 2001: 97-98), all this taken together is changing and influencing the expectations women bring with them when entering marriage. The fulfilment of these expectations and the different position of women in marriage also have an impact on men. Men also bring expectations and may need to negotiate them with their partners' in order to sustain the institution of marriage. For instance, conventional notions of marriage associate authority of the house with the male image, particularly fathers. However, women's position within the home is changing the locus of authority. Authority can be shared and sometimes conceded to the wife as Steven explained when commenting on who has the voice of authority in his house:

SC: Well! Yeah, mhm mhm, who has the voice of authority, in your house?

SS: My wife.

SC: Oh, why does she have it?

SS: I don't know, she is just more, ... I don't know, she's,... I don't know, she thinks more than before she goes to do anything. I goes ahead and does anything. She is really smart. [laughing]

SC: Mhm mhm Does it bother you at all?

SS: Not really. Cause she usually knows, where my respects come.

SC: Mhm and her decisions of course, are usually affecting the three of you?

SS: Three of us, yeah.

His marriage in some ways was different from that of his parents but, as he recounted, the values guiding his behaviour in marriage were a combination of the teachings from his parents and what he had learned in school.

The data from the narrations suggest that, as in the past, men and women in June's Cove enter marriage with expectations. What is different is the type of expectations that each person brings, what informs these expectations, and how individuals pursue their fulfilment.

Most of the women under 40 I met for this study presented a similar version of expectations of their marriages: for instance they expect a partnership based on love with shared authority and decision-making, shared duties for housework and childcare, that enables them to pursue employment and/or education while continuing to participate socially in the community life. Paula, a 25 year old plant worker, recalls her mother and grandmother's roles and the connection to her expectations to be a contributing party in her marriage:

PW: Well, older people stays in the house and the men goes out and earns their own makes their living and feeds their family. But I mean, with us younger crowd, I think, it takes two to work and two to provide for the family. We all believe, I think, [laughing] that *we are our own woman*. We can do whatever we want. We don't live by them laws anymore.

SC: When do you think that those laws got broken?

PW: Well, ever since I can remember. I mean, both mom and dad worked, right? So, that's all I'm used to. But then again, my grandparents, my grandmother hardly ever worked not until she was up in her fifties or something like that. That's when she started to work and she never had no reason to because they always believe that a woman should be raising the children in the house and staying in the house. But as years went on, things are starting to, I guess, modernize, you know with the other civilizations. Because it seems like we were in this little Island in the middle of the Atlantic. We were our own civilization and we don't know what else is going on in the world. That's what it always seemed like. But I knows it's not true. [laughing] There's a lot of changes after being made (PW female 25: 25-26).

Paula's comments declare a connection between her expectation to be economically active and the fact that her mother already exercised this role in the house. At the same time she points to what she refers to as *laws* that dictated the roles and expectations of women in the past; the very laws that her generation is breaking away from, as younger women define themselves in their own terms: as *their own women*. These expectations are not a complete rejection of pre-assigned roles and responsibilities. Rather, they represent a push toward redefinition of the old model and a call for marriage to become a partnership based on egalitarianism.

Particular expectations and acts of individuals are slowly filtering into the general understanding of marriage and are becoming part of the psyche of those considering marriage. Some of the young, single women I spoke to told me that they wanted to get careers, education and then consider marriage. They certainly did not want to have a husband like their father who did not participate equally in doing housework. The pursuit of education/career constitutes a strategy to fulfil expectations, and an opportunity to experience independent living away from the community. Judy B for instance thinks that education comes before marriage:

To me, I don't really think I want to get married, now. Perhaps, I might have a different opinion once I get involved in a relationship after a while. But right now, ah, I don't really want to be tied down. To me, like I say, young people, a few young people here in June's Cove are getting married. To me, I think they're wasting part of their life. Like you have your whole life ahead of you to get married. And it's just, I don't think you should rush into anything. To go and enjoy your life and ... then as you go to get married later on, right? I'd rather, to me, I wants to go and get my education and get my home and then perhaps get involved with someone. Now, maybe it mightn't happen that way, but that's how I plan to do it, right? 'Cause I'd rather go and enjoy my life (JB 18 female: 16).

It has been documented that greater changes in attitudes and role expectations toward marriage tend to come from attending schools and living away from home (Botkin *et al* 2000: 934). Judy was preparing herself to go to university that fall.

Parents also play a crucial role in encouraging their children to pursue education as they see the future of the fishery as uncertain. Sarah B, a 41-year old plant worker for instance, encouraged her daughter to pursue education and a future outside of the fishery because in her view “there was no future in it.” She also thought that her options to stay or not in her marriage were mediated by her job mobility. According to her, marrying at a young age limits young people’s ability to pursue higher education, hence limiting occupational options, partner selection and independent living. She stressed that she would have felt freer to make different decisions in her marriage, if only she had an occupation or profession that she could use outside of her community. She advised her 18-year old daughter to study and become a professional before thinking about marriage.

Ah, I always tells [my daughter] not to get married. I mean I got it okay; I can't complain. But, I'd like to see ah, young people get somewhere. Ah get a, have a good life, get a good job, right? There's nothing wrong with getting married, but ... it's better for 'em to have their education down first, right? And have a good job and not to have to be worrying about a dollar all the time. (SB female 41: 28)

Elizabeth P shared Sarah’s views and also encouraged her daughter to seek an occupation outside of the fishery. She had very clear ideas on what marriage should be like and what was the best age for young people to marry. Many of these came from her own experience with marriage, which, in her own words, was “special.” Her late husband was “the most understanding person in the world” and for her this was a good reason to stay married to him for so long. It was important for her to have a partner, and this was precisely what she found in him (EP female 66: 11-12). In the following quote, she

describes her husband's participation in the home and highlights the sharp contrast between what she saw growing up and what she lived.

Oh, [my husband] was wonderful. Washing the dishes, no dirty dishes, cleaned up the kitchen tiles, waxing, everything like that. Well he used to prepare, you know, he prepared meals. He was good for that. Except, now, he didn't make bread or cakes or anything like that. You know, he didn't do anything like that, that was what I did and make up beds. He didn't do anything like that. But wash the dishes, clean the floor, he did that.

SC: Can you compare the way things were done in your house then to the way things were done at your parents' house?

EP: Oh my, right the opposite really. Because, I don't know of my brothers or my father ever taking responsibility for cleaning or doing the dishes or the laundry or anything like that. Them years it was the women. Now, the men would bring in the wood of course you'd burn wood them times. They'd bring the wood or they'd bring the water but that was it. The women did the rest. but I'm glad I didn't get a husband like that I wouldn't have kept him I don't think. [laughing] (EP: 11-12)

Her marriage spanned the period from the 1970s to mid-1990s. She saw it as a different, interpreted and adapted version of marriage and one of the few that did not fit or conform with the local notions of roles prescribed to men and women. In her opinion, her experience was a matter of luck. Nonetheless, she thought that everyone had the right to expect a marriage based on equality between partners where decisions were made in partnership.

### *selecting a partner, mate*

For women, being able to count on men to do more housework and child care and support from the TAGS program could potentially open spaces for them to explore their work potential beyond the narrow definition of wife and mother and beyond fish processing to pursue new careers or start their own businesses. Men and women took these possibilities into account when selecting their partners (Botkin *et al* 2000: 933-942).

A key aspect of marriage is partner selection. This complex process is partly informed by the social norms valued in the community, individuals' aspirations, and the values prevalent in the society at large. Working through the stories I heard in June's Cove produced a multidimensional depiction of this process and below I present some of the elements involved in the search and selection process associated with finding the "ideal" partner/spouse.

The criteria for selection of a spouse/partner have changed over time. In the past, a partner was mainly selected with an instrumental view of how he/she could contribute to the survival of the family. This point is better illustrated in the comment Jeffrey's grandfather made to him about how he selected his own wife: "years ago, if she was good at saltin' fish, she was a good woman to marry" (JA 24: 33). As noted earlier in this chapter, the socio-economic conditions (high rates of unemployment and poverty; restricted options and adverse climatic conditions, among others) in the outports required marriage to be both a foundation for the family and an instrumental mechanism to ensure the survival of the family and the community. Supported by the strong voice of the clergy in government policies, heterosexual, monogamous families had better chances to make it than single people (Cadigan 1995: 48-59). It was a *partnership for survival*.

In more recent times, selecting a partner to marry or with whom to cohabitate follows a different impetus. June's Cove's narrators mentioned many reasons to partner, including: love, physical attraction, sex, companionship, and building a family. The narratives of men and women, a cross-section of individuals between the ages of 18 and 86, reveal a list of valued traits that the ideal potential partner should have. The narratives and the list they yield reflect modern ideas and tendencies, but they also bear strong

elements of traits valued in the past, those very traits that enabled the survival of these households and communities. Chapter five explores descriptions men and women in connection to gendered identities in more detail. In this chapter I use them to illuminate the discussion of partner selection. What follows is a composite of *ideals* extracted from the narrations of men and women in mid-1990s. Broadly speaking, the narratives describe the ideal woman to marry as one who: works hard, 'is a good mother and family woman', 'is strong', 'has no fears', 'knows how to carry herself', 'respects herself', 'is a good financial manager', 'is diplomatic', 'is willing to share the duties and to move away from traditional roles', 'is independent', 'speaks her mind', 'defends her own beliefs', and 'is vocal'.

The same narratives describe the ideal man to marry as one who: 'works hard', 'protects his family', 'is more liberated', 'respects strong women', 'is not afraid of housework and childcare', 'loves kids', 'likes his freedom', 'is responsible', 'is understanding', 'enjoys some fun', 'is not lazy', 'is not afraid to take work anywhere', 'loves the woods', 'is supportive of his family', 'is loving and caring', 'is a strong father', and 'is a good husband and listener'.

The descriptions of the ideal 'woman' and 'man' offered by men and women in June's Cove raise several points: first, most of the ideal features for women and men can be interchanged as they overlap and blur the gender lines. In general, the expectations for men and women are high and tend to emphasize strength, independence and responsibility; the very traits that enabled survival in the outports in the past. The differences can be found in the expectation for men to become more accommodating and willing to compromise; while women are expected to become more assertive. Second, the

descriptions hint at the ways the socio-economic conditions are shaping and influencing the attitudes and behaviour of individuals related to partner selection. Third, there is also an indication of an increased acceptance of flexible roles for partners that reflects tendencies in the larger Canadian society. Fourth, whether all these attributes are attainable by one given person, individuals in June's Cove are taking various combinations of these issues into account when selecting their partner in the context of their own reality in which they negotiate expectations. Finally, the most significant point emerging from the lists is the interconnection between partner selection processes, socio-economic conditions, and gender identity of individuals. These intersect to produce a process that pushes the meaning of marriage beyond its normative signification – a relationship based on love. Their intersection also signals a gendered positionality of individuals actively involved in the redefinition of themselves, associated expectations and social institutions, such as marriage, while exploring alternatives.

### *negotiating 'roles', working and deciding together*

The findings of this study indicate that while marriage is still happening in June's Cove, people conceptualize marriage and partnership in different ways. The partnership of marriage has changed through the expectations of the partners, but also because of new socio-economic forces. For instance, most families I met in June's Cove had two wage earners, a trend consistent with the social and economic changes in Canada as a whole (Baker 2000; Armstrong and Armstrong 1994). For June's Cove women this has meant that, in addition to their work at the plant, their new job, or retraining activity, many were still responsible for housework or at least for its management. However, women also felt

that their earning capacity allowed them to contribute to the household finances and raised their standing in their homes for decision-making. There is a direct association between women's economic independence and their perceived value. This partly explains why Elisabeth and Sarah would insist that their daughters obtain an education before thinking about marriage.

Most couples I interviewed reported that decision-making in their homes was participatory and involved consensus;

Ah, we budgets and we both decide which is more important which bills should be paid and how they should be paid. We both work together on, on finances and making sure that there taking care of (PW female 25: 24).

Paula, Sarah and other women I interviewed suggested that their position in the house has come as a result of their increased participation in the labour force, and especially given their status as wage earners. They would also say that the process has been rocky and uphill.

The dual-income imperative prevailing in Canadian society subjects women and many men to competing pressures and expectations both at home and at work (Fox and Luxton 1993; Sinclair and Felt 1992). For men, this has meant major adjustments in the way they view their role as husbands and their place at home. Some of the men I spoke to revealed not only an awareness of these issues but also a will to learn new models.

I tried to help the wife out in cooking all I can. Because as far as I'm concerned she got just as much right of freedom as I have. I don't mind staying home, even now and cook. Because, people will say a woman's place is in the home, not in my mind. It's not, why is I any better than you, or my wife or whatever. Everybody got to have so much time to theirselves. ... If you can cook, you help out because your equal, in my view of it. Now, older people wouldn't even pick up their own mug and put on the table and get a cup of tea. Not on their own. If she didn't put it on the table you don't have it that's gone to extreme with it, right? But that was the

way the old people always was. To them, and they didn't change I suppose. But everything is changed today (Albert male 50: 30).

Albert was a fisher who sold his license and left the fishery. He had more time at home and was able to cook more often. But he liked cooking and shared this responsibility with his wife. There was an element of yearning for the man of the past in their narrations, but at the same time an acceptance of new roles, meanings and possibilities. Their acceptance is mediated in part by the socio-economic reality imposed by the moratorium and the softening of the boundaries drawn around gender roles.

The collapse of the fishery displaced 116 persons in June's Cove, which had a population of around 500 at the time of the study. The occupational structure changed dramatically and TAGS records reported that 116 persons were registered and participated in the program, 98 plant workers and 18 fishers. Out of the 116 persons, 62 were women compared to 54 men, representing 20 percent of community. With this level of displacement and social disruption, it is difficult to sustain past practices. Moreover, it becomes imperative to find mechanisms to adapt to the new situation. The TAGS records suggest that a higher proportion of retrained women than men were able to find employment or to set up independent businesses (Data obtained directly from TAGS officer for the region, organized by age, gender, length of program, etc). Research on the processes of restructuring underway in Newfoundland, examined the impact of TAGS on women and their health. It states that "Although [women] made up roughly one-third of displaced fisheries workers in Newfoundland and Labrador, women filled only 20% of the TAGS-funded training seats in our study area. Women's training was concentrated in fishery, business, computers and service industry programs" (Neis and Grzetic,

forthcoming: 21 – page in manuscript). Discussing June's Cove's case specifically, the TAGS officer for the area commented that men had had more difficulty finding and retaining employment up to the time of this study and their work opportunities were greatly reduced, while at the same time new possibilities opened up for women (not necessarily at the expense of men) (TAGS Officer: personal communication).

The national census seems to confirm this. After a decade under the moratorium, women appear to be more employable than men, thus changing the gender dynamics in June's Cove. According to the 2001 census, the overall employment rate among people of working age (15 to 64 years) in the community was 29 percent. Only 21% (N=150) of men were employed compared to 36% (N=155) of women (Census 2001- Statistics Canada). These census data stand in sharp contrast to data from 1996 when men's participation rated at 45% (N=160) and women's at 37% (N=175).

The difference confirms women's greater involvement in paid labour relative to men within the community and points to men's reduced participation in the labour force in recent years and their inability to provide for their family in the "traditional" sense, a phenomenon undoubtedly linked to the cod moratorium. This phenomenon may be fostering a reconfiguration of the gender "roles" (provider and care giver), and spheres of influence for men and women in the community.

In some cases, women have found themselves as the only earner in the household, and have had to renegotiate their role considering the extended presence of their partners at home. Households with women as the sole earner are not new in rural Newfoundland as many men have died at sea and there have been lots of single mothers over the years. However, this situation was unique in that their partners were still alive and often living

with them. This process is hard for both partners, yet people are willing to consider it and give it a try. As noted above, the softening of boundaries around gender roles in marriage made it more acceptable for men to take on what for many *still* is considered women's duties such as domestic work. Trend towards more egalitarian roles in marriage competed with die-hard old gender conceptions and practices, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Some men and many women in June's Cove seized this flexibility and used it as a mechanism to cope with the pressures of the crisis. Partners/spouses had to negotiate and decide together what role each partner would play—provider or caregiver—in order to better navigate the socio-economic conditions facing them in spite of the double income imperative.

In adopting new behaviours, some young men in June's Cove had to navigate between the new pressures, such as looking for work opportunities outside the fishery, and old gender models that were partly sustained by the occupational structure surrounding the fishery. Their explorations of new gender models within their marriages/families responded to changing social environments and found validation in the actions and practices of older men who at one point were scorned by their peers in the community. In listening to those who ventured into new practices, their voices spoke of new masculinities that allowed them to come to terms with changes that they could not control.

New versions of masculinities such as the ones being enacted in June's Cove are slowly influencing the perceptions and attitudes toward domestic work. In the last three decades, Canadian public discourse has assigned a higher value and importance to

domestic work. There is also a growing acceptance and expectation of men's participation in domestic work, including housework, childcare and general emotional support in the home and similar expectations exist for women to stabilize or increase the family income by taking on the role of provider through their participation in the labour market<sup>4</sup>. In recognition of these social changes and thanks to strong lobbying, the government has introduced some policies in support of more equitable sharing of domestic work, such as parental leaves open to both parents. And yet, marriages can also end up in divorce leading some people in June's Cove to suggest that cohabitation is better than divorce.

### **cohabitation, better than divorce**

As attitudes toward marriage and partner selection change, new models of marriage open up. Cohabitation is one such model. Cohabitation is generally understood as the non-legalized conjugal life of a man and a woman, which can be recognized as having the status of a legal union. And, as we have seen, in recent years there is a growing effort to give the same recognition, legal status and social rights to same-sex couples. These changes have been slow in coming and require social acceptance among those sectors of the population that have the powers to object and or to sanction them. This section looks briefly at cohabitation, especially as an alternative to divorce. This perspective emerged in many of my conversations with men and women in June's Cove wanted to include it as it speaks also to the changes in marriage.

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that employment opportunities for women do not always result in their ability to comfortably support a household. In fact, it is widely acknowledged that single parent-households, generally headed by women, are more likely to face poverty and experience hunger than two-parent ones. Lynn McIntyre, Sarah Connor, and James Warren, "A Glimpse of Child Hunger in Canada" W-98-26E, Working Paper Series, Applied Research Branch, Strategic Policy, Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa, October 1998: 18.

Cohabitation or common-law living is relatively common among young people in June's Cove. Some of the older people and some church leaders I interviewed in the community expressed a high level of tolerance of this practice. They suggested that, ideally, every couple that decides to share their lives together should marry. Nonetheless, they were also prepared to make concessions for those who opted to cohabit. One of my questions for interviews inquired about the common-law couples in the community. When I approached the subject, people were open to talk about it, and knew the names of every common-law couple in town.

Given the number of weddings that took place that year, I was surprised that older men and some women were especially open to the idea of cohabitation. In their opinion cohabitation was a necessary step before deciding to marry. The cohabitation period would enable a couple to learn about living together, and whether or not they are right for each other. Common-law living is the "dry-run" for marriage, they said, that in many cases prevents the legal wrangling associated with dissolving a legal union with divorce. Louise C, who by then had been married for over 45 years, thought that cohabitation was a positive thing to do:

Well maybe they're trying to see if they are right for one another. And if they live, like, a few months together, maybe they see they're not right, and they separate. It's better to do that than to get married and have kids involved. You know. That's where the hurt comes in, when people get married and have kids. It doesn't matter if they separate if they don't have kids. You know, but you have kids, they're hurt too (LC female 64: 14).

In her view, cohabiting allows the couple to assess issues of compatibility before having children and thus sparing the kids from needless suffering. Danielle and Albert shared

Louise's opinions and views as had witnessed the impact of separation and divorce on their grandchildren. They saw cohabitation as a way to prevent divorces.

Cohabitation was also a recommended option to marrying young. For most of my narrators marriage is an institution for life. At first glance, promoting and approving of cohabitation may seem to be at odds with more traditional notions of marriage. However, a closer look yields a different picture and explains the apparent contradiction. Some parents in June's Cove consider three issues when promoting common-law living: they acknowledge that young people are becoming sexually active at earlier ages than in the past and it is necessary to create safe conditions for them to explore their sexuality. Secondly, they hope that such open attitudes will help prevent unwanted pregnancies or single parenthood for their children. For instance, I was present during a conversation about contraceptives that a group of women had about teenage attitudes toward sex. One mother conceded that she had recommended the pill to her 17 year old daughter, who had been with same boyfriend for over 6 months. She figured that she needed to equip her daughter with the knowledge to prevent an unwanted pregnancy. And at the same time recognizing teenage sexual activity.

The third issue is more philosophical and has to do with the notion that marriage should be for life and therefore every effort should be made to ensure its success including pre-marital cohabitation. If cohabitation shows that the couple is incompatible, then they can separate without prejudice and this, in their minds, is better than an acrimonious divorce. As Louise's comments suggests.

While many voices in the community displayed a convergence toward the more relaxed attitudes more prevalent in Canadian society about living together, there are local

values that weigh both morally and socially. Divorcing still has a very high social price and it is considered a failure of the individual, or a sign of “family instability.” In contrast, as elsewhere, “common-law unions (also called consensual relationships or cohabitation) commence without formalities, have few or no legal effects, and may be dissolved without forewarning or a legal ruling” (Dumas and Peron 1992: 3). There is a sense of freedom that comes with cohabiting. These are some of the reasons why some young people prefer to “just live together.” Cohabiting is not completely free of legal ties, as common-law partners have the same legal rights as married ones partly due gains made by advocates.

There is a general belief that cohabitation privileges the love relationship while favouring the individual autonomy which enables each partner to pursue their own career, education and other aspirations. According to the research, “unmarried couples living together are more insistent on *equality* in partners’ economic contributions... while married couples are more oriented to an economic division of labor in which one spouse earns more of the income” (Nock 1998:16). Some argue that common law unions or cohabitations are so widespread throughout the Western world thanks to the availability and adequate use of contraceptives, lengthy periods of study (university), female participation in the job market and paradoxically, the limited job opportunities for men and women (Nock 1998: 16-17; Baker 2001:16-17, Botkin *et al* 2000). While cohabitation is purported to prevent divorce or separation, some researchers state that: “couples who live together before marriage face a higher likelihood of divorce than couples who do not” (Wilson 2001: 159). Predicting the likelihood of divorce is really difficult, with or without cohabitation.

As mentioned earlier the import of this cohabitation to the discussion of marriage practices lies in the fact that it shows how the notions of family are becoming flexible and transcending the wall of marriage. Finding open attitudes to cohabitation suggests a dialogue between June's Cove and Canadian society as a whole.

### **conclusion: is marriage the same as in the past?**

Narrations of individuals suggest that marriage is not the same in June's Cove as it was before. The timeline does not go back to the moratorium. It may go further back to the times when the fisheries became more mechanized and turned women and men into wage labourers (working in ships and processing plants); or it could go back to the time when Newfoundland joined confederation and Canada extended the social security programs to Newfoundlanders. Answering this question will require more research. For the moment, I will let Elizabeth P offer her views:

SC: Is marriage the same as it was in the past, say for young people?

EP: No, no, they don't take it seriously like they did one time, one time if you got married, you know you expected to stay home, have a family care for your family. Now when they get married they you know, go on to Trade School, they go wherever they want to go, that home life is not the same. ... I think a lot of it is both parties are working.

See, years back in Newfoundland when you got married, there was only the man working and the woman was to stay home and have youngsters. That was her job, to have youngsters. You know, she had no money so she just had to stay there, she's so dependent on her husband that she had to stay there. Whether she wanted to stay married or not. [laughing] She had no choice you know, but now women are out working same as men, they don't depend on men. They don't need their money. They don't need their protection. They don't need their homes, they don't need anything now. You know, they got it made and if they have one child or two at the most, that's my family that's it (EP female 64: 19).

Her comment clearly indicates a change, and especially a change that comes from women. Women's positions within marriage; their expectations and attitudes may render

the old adage: “*married through thick and thin*” inapplicable to their lives. As some researchers suggest, women’s perception of their roles seems to reflect more the changing socio-political and economic climate and in many instances their attitudes and actions are catalysts for changes in men’s roles and self-perceptions (Botkin *et al* 2000: 933).

The foregoing discussion does not suggest that the changes in marriage observed in June's Cove are the direct result of the cod moratorium. The purpose of the discussion was to draw attention to how the changes and new definitions of marriage in June's Cove converge with some of the notions and practices in Canadian society at large. It also shows how changes in gender attitudes and practices are simultaneously acts of contestation to social norms as well as mechanisms for adaptation to social change and crises. Using marriage as a site for contestation and a mechanism for adaptation, individuals enter a hermeneutic process of interpretation and creation of meaning of social institutions through the juxtaposition of their own knowledge and values with those from the larger society to reconfigure their reality. The reconfigurations involve change in expectations of women and men, softening of the boundaries around gender roles more compatible with new socio-economic demands. Processes of re-conceptualization and redefinitions of social institutions originate in the interpreted understanding and practices that form social interactions, enactments and discursive strategies deployed by individuals or groups of individuals in response to changing environments as the next chapter shows.

## Chapter 5

### Femininities and Masculinities: Making selves, Making meaning

Well, years ago, *the man was a man*. But now, like for me, if I got married, and my wife was doin' better than me, and we got youngsters, and one of us had to stay home with the youngsters, I'd just as soon stay home as she would, right? ... I think one is as good as another (Jeffrey A, male 24: 33-34).

Jeffrey A made this statement when he was in his mid-twenties and as he prepared to leave June's Cove to search for work elsewhere. After working for a few weeks at the processing plant, he was laid off. The processing plant was able to employ fewer members of the local labour force than in the past, a situation that had worsened since the implementation of the cod moratorium. Despite the plant's continued access to crab and some other species, Jeffrey and many other young people experienced very limited summer employment, if any. Young people were particularly disadvantaged because they were lower on the seniority list at the plant than other workers and thus less likely to be called in to work.

Jeffrey's statement shows him oscillating between yearning and awareness as he distinguishes between the man of the past, "who was a man" and himself, indicating both the passage of time and a shift in the signification of the word *man*. In making this distinction, he re-articulates his own identity by emphasizing his willingness to take on the traditional women's responsibility for child-caring because "one is as good as another" and by suggesting that today, a man is not so much a "man" as a person. Although speaking in hypothetical terms, Jeffrey indicates a willingness to take on care giving responsibilities at home should he marry a woman with better employment

opportunities than his own. His statement also indicates his awareness that such attitudes and potential behaviour were not typically associated with masculinity in June's Cove and may still not be widely accepted.

Jeffrey's comment is framed in a particular historical moment and it can be argued that Jeffrey's motivation to explore care giving responsibilities might be seen as an adaptive response to the realities imposed by the moratorium. In these new realities, the *man of the past*, defined mainly by his "role" as a provider and paid work outside the home, no longer holds this "role" as his exclusive province. New realities may well place women in that "role" changing, in the process, the signifier *woman*, defined mainly by her role as 'care-giver and homemaker.' Thus, both *man* and *woman* have the same potential for a shift in signification, for both signifiers are defined in reference to their 'roles' in the home and in the community as *caregivers or providers* respectively.

Jeffrey's comment brings to the fore a very complex process of negotiation and evolution in the meanings of masculinity and femininity. It provides a propitious starting point for this chapter which examines the ambiguities, uncertainties and instabilities surrounding the gender identities in June's Cove as men and women experienced, formulated, articulated and practiced them *vis-à-vis* the cod moratorium and other larger, societal changes in rural Newfoundland in the mid-1990's. More specifically, it seeks to provide *an* answer to the questions: Have the gender perceptions and conceptualizations of men and women in June's Cove been affected by the cod moratorium? If so, in what ways? Setting up the questions in this manner does not imply a direct causal link between the cod moratorium and social change, but rather the moratorium is used here as a temporal bracket within which social change can be analyzed and historicized.

The objective of this chapter is to examine the extent to which the cod moratorium has influenced the processes of gender meaning creation and to show how the moratorium becomes both an influencing force and the context where attitudes, perceptions and practices are reformulated and sustained. The analysis focuses on the gendered discursive strategies used to adapt to a changing social and natural environment, paying particular attention to notions, attitudes, perceptions, behaviours and practices of gender (i.e., femininity and masculinity) and work (paid and unpaid), as well as “roles” and responsibilities.

The chapter is divided into six sections. The first section briefly presents an overview of the concepts used in the discussions. The second section provides a brief sketch of gender relations in June's Cove as seen in the past, prior to the implementation of the cod moratorium. Information for this section comes mainly from the testimonies of the people in June's Cove, and it is complemented with portrayals found in the literature. The section serves as baseline for contrasting gender attitudes and behaviours in pre- and post moratorium days. Although, there is no intention to imply a causal relationship between the social change observed in June's Cove and the cod moratorium, it is important to use it as a dividing line in order to establish the necessary contrast for the analysis: before and after. The third, fourth and fifth sections discuss the primary findings of my research on the attitudes and behaviours around household divisions of labour, parenting, and employment. These sections also discuss the gender reconfigurations underway – how these contribute to a different sense of gender identity for many men and women as they take on different responsibilities – and the sites where these reconfigurations occur. The final section is a reflection surveying the key gender trends present in June's Cove;

the sources of influence in gender (family, friends, society, school, church, etc); and the processes by which gender strategies and behaviours are changing.

### **situating gender identities in Newfoundland**

As noted in chapter two, gender identity here is understood to be “an active and never-completed process of engendering or enculturation,” a process of “becoming” (McNay 1993: 71) gendered beings by acquiring traits associated with masculinity or femininity. This does not mean that people are empty vessels that come to embody gender, it means rather that the cultural and social assignment and acquisition of an identity associated with being feminine or masculine based on the biological sex (female or male). The process is not completely imposed or entirely a matter of choice, as individuals interpret the “cultural reality which is laden with sanctions, taboos, and prescriptions. The body is the locus of cultural interpretations, i.e. it is always caught up and defined within a social context; and it is also the site at which the individual had to take up and actively interpret that set of received interpretations” (McNay 1993: 72). Thus, femininity and masculinity are expressed through bodily performances of gendered acts that fit within a set of expectations and “roles” built around each category.

Women and men in June's Cove define their gender identities in terms of roles, responsibilities and the occupational context where people enact them. The enactment of work includes all the productive and reproductive tasks that take place in and outside the home to ensure a sustained livelihood. These tasks can be separated into care giving and income earning categories, and ‘typically’ are used as markers for gender identity for women and men respectively. These categories are not absolutes, and people adhere to

them in varying degrees depending on their attitudes and behaviours (practices), and to some extent this determines the spheres of activities for men and women.

Notions of masculinity and femininity are viewed through a post-structuralist lens, which enables a deconstruction and unfolding of the conventional injunctions, permitting a look into the crevices that hide complexities and diversities during a period of occupational restructuring. Work is understood as an organizing principle for social arrangements since it enables individuals to take on social roles in order to sustain a community. Work is also a social process and a site for the enactment of gendered social relationships. Therefore, work is key to gender identity. Looking at the effects of the moratorium on identities in relation to work is particularly important in a community defined by one activity, such as fishing. This is especially important as thousands of people were displaced from work as result of the implementation of the moratorium and as employment opportunities diminished and changed (Williams 1997: 2; Muzychka 1994: 4).

The following discussion traces a temporal line to expose the differences and similarities in gender behaviour before and after the moratorium. It should be noted that the focus of this study is the sites and settings where gender relations occur, looking mainly for points of articulation of resistance and challenges to conventional injunctions of gender. Nonetheless, I acknowledge and recognize the gendered power differential existing and sustained by present arrangements and understandings of 'roles', which is why I focus on points of resistance, since therein lie the possibilities for change.

### **years ago ...the roles were clear**

Historical contexts and moments are the conditions that in many ways explain and sometimes “justify” social arrangements (such as division of labour) both at home and in the community. In Newfoundland, women have been expected to take complete responsibility for all domestic work, in addition to their responsibilities in paid labour (Davis & Nadel-Klein 1988: 19-26), while men have been found engaged in paid labour and responsible for work outside the home (Sinclair 1999). This socially accepted “sexual” division of labour is predicated on biological considerations that separate men and women (male and female): women’s weakness, and nurturing abilities and men’s physical strength and ability to provide. Care-giving and breadwinning responsibilities are separated by a line, albeit not always a very neat line.

When speaking to people in June’s Cove about the changes they have seen in the division of labour since the cod moratorium, many of them offered a contrast between the present and what was there before. For instance Elizabeth P, a sixty-six year old woman noted:

I don't know, I think a lot of it, is both parties are working, see years back in Newfoundland, when you got married, there was only the man working and the woman was to stay home and have youngsters. That was her job: have youngsters. You know, she had no money so she just had to stay there, she's so dependant on her husband that she had to stay there. Whether she wanted to stay married or not [laughing] (EP female 66: 19).

While Elizabeth was describing the past, Josephine B, a sixty-four year old woman, made a similar comment, but she chose to express her views with regard to the place and roles of men and women in the home:

Women, I s'pose, they should do the housework as such. And men, then you have outside work to be done, repairs and whatever. They would be responsible for that you know, to a certain extent (JBr female 64: 16).

For Josephine things had always been the same and very little had changed. Things were still done according to old fashioned rules with clear rules for men and women. Men *could help* at home, but housework was a woman's job. Consider her comment on men who take on domestic work and what this says about women,

I don't know girl, some men, ah you'll hear that they get up, they cook breakfast, they wash dishes, now that's I suppose [happens] if they are not working some place else you know. And they cook the meals and do the housework but I don't know what the women does -- ah if the men are doing all of this? But I mean I don't know of too many cases. I don't know of anyone (JBr Female 64: 16).

In her view, men did not have to do this domestic work. If they were to do more than the occasional act of help, this would put into question the ability of the woman to keep her house. Traditional division of labour were more acceptable to her as these were the rules she learned growing up. Josephine's views were not isolated, nor were they linked to her life stage, in fact some younger people shared her views. Sarah (40), Lavinia (40), Corey (40) and Wilma (52) for instance also shared her views on the gender division of labour. As noted in Chapter 1, the literature suggests that the division of labour and the arrangement surrounding it was in part possible given the activities required by fishing, which in my view it adds another layer of "sexual" division of labour.

As documented by some researchers (Davis 1983, 1988; Porter 1993; 82-93), women have been crucial for work on 'land', especially responsible for running and maintaining the house, looking after children, meal preparation, bookkeeping, making and eventually processing fish, among other duties. Over time the shape of the duties has changed, but they still remain the key people on land. There were many technological

changes in Newfoundland fisheries starting in the 1960s to date, and processing of marine products was changed. 'Making fish' (cleaning and salting fish by hand on the stages) was replaced by automated processing in plants where people became extensions of heavy machinery with women representing the majority of plant workers (Porter 1993: 83; Wright 1995: 192-141). Women's large participation in the labour force, mainly through employment at processing plants continued up until 1992, when many of them lost their jobs due to plant closures (Robinson 1995).

Many men were also affected by plant closures, but most of those affected were fishers harvesting cod. The fleet in June's Cove was characterized by family-operated small, open skiffs (under 30 feet), and a few larger sized boats. Most of the fishers caught cod using cod-traps, and some also jigged, and towed lines. The crab fishery was hardly affected by the moratorium, except for the fact that displaced cod fishers wanted to enter in it to continue to make a living. The government placed quota restrictions to keep the fleet small, and therefore many of the fishers could not join the new and lucrative crab fishery. Consequently, many men and women were displaced from employment and were "partially protected by a massive government compensation package. The initial emergency program was replaced after two years by TAGS (the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy), which was scheduled to run until 1999, but lack of funding brought the terminal date forward to May 1998" (Sinclair 2002a: 294).

Given this context, we go back to the question: Have the gender perceptions and conceptualizations of men and women in June's Cove been affected by the cod moratorium? There are number of assumptions behind this question: 1) the moratorium is a historical juncture with implications for the social and economic conditions of June's

Cove; 2) social practices in general, and gender practices in particular, are sustained in the presence of certain conditions (social, economic, etc.); 3) change in social conditions may influence changes in social practices and hence the question of how the gender practices have been affected by the cod moratorium that changed the social and economic conditions in June's Cove and many other communities in Newfoundland. This question aims at unearthing deeper concepts as they relate to gender identities, the knowledge that informs those identities and how the moratorium with its effects on the socio-economic conditions of the community fosters changes in local gendered practices and knowledge.

We have heard in Elizabeth and Josephine's accounts that traditional gender practices continue among many people in the community. And, we also know that June's Cove is seeing many changes, as hinted in Jeffrey's account. What remains to be established is the degree of change occurring; the sites where these changes are taking place; the discursive strategies behind the changes; the manifestations of these changes in the enactments of masculinities and femininities; and the outside influences playing a part in these changes. In the next sections, using narrators' accounts, I explore some of these changes and their manifestations.

### **nouns and verbs<sup>1</sup>**

Gender is the result of social relationships among individuals at many levels, in the home, in the community, in the workplace. The gender expectations placed on individuals come from the knowledge of local gendered practices and knowledge. In some households in June's Cove the gender expectations had to change to enable the family to cope with the

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<sup>1</sup> A notion loosely borrowed from Judith Butler 1990.

impact of the cod moratorium. One of the areas where the change is evident is the attitudes toward participation of *women in the labour force*. All the women I interviewed were or had been employed, and felt that their earnings had been crucial to the expenses of the household and to making joint decisions. Some of the narrators I met had been formally employed for over 20 years, while others were enjoying retirement. Women expressed their feeling of satisfaction to be able to contribute to the household income. Louise C recalled with pride her days as a plant worker and with a clear sense of empowerment for her contribution in her home. Here is what she said:

SC: Can you tell me what it means to you to have been a plant worker?

LC: Well it provided a good living for us. You know. I got to say that, it did provide. If it wasn't for the plant, I would just have one income. But if I go to work, we've had two incomes, which made it better for our family. A lot better.

SC: How much better?

LC: Well, I could give my children a good education. I had a son. He had a good education. He done a year at university drafting, and a year as an architect. Which, by me working, I helped him get through, you know. He never had to get any loans or anything. So that was good. And my daughter, she did ah [thinking] trying to remember now, computer, and she passed with honours. And the second boy, now, he's a crab catcher, on a long liner. He's been at that for over 20 years (LC female 64: 3-4).

It is clear that her participation in the labour force signified more economic stability for her family. Many of the female narrators saw themselves as important contributors to their family's financial stability and also saw this as contributing to easier relationships at home. Elizabeth P remembers what it meant to have more money in the house:

SC: You just discussed it together?

EP: That's right and if he wanted anything he told me and he'd just go and get it, there was money there to go and get it, and whatever I wanted I'd go and get it, so there was no problem. ... We had no problem with that because of course we had money because he come home every week with a cheque and that made a lot of difference, you know if you need something you know the money is there so you don't have to say now you can't spend that because I got to pay a bill, next week or

something like that we knew nothing about that you know. Thank the Lord for that. That made it much easier (EP female 66: 12).

Providing for the home is the work of two people. And historically, women have been part of the community's economy as documented by many (Neis & Williams 1997; Porter 1993; Sinclair & Felt 1995; Wright 1995; Sinclair forthcoming). However, the actual degree of women's participation was not formally recognized in the official statistics. Sinclair notes that according to the census for the region, only "8.1 percent of those 14 and over were employed" and that much of the labour of women and children was unreported and unrecorded (2002b: 136). The technological changes introduced to the fisheries, in particular to the processing of marine products, created employment opportunities or wage-labour and the "transformation of women's seasonal unpaid labour in 'making fish' into full-time, sometimes full-year employment in the plants" (Sinclair 202b: 137). Arguably, employment moved many women from the *anonymity* of a family hand to the *visibility* of company records. It should be noted that this move involved limited economic advantages for women, as they were still underpaid compared to their male counterparts (Neis & Williams 1997; LJ 2002: personal communication). The relative degree of benefit improved somewhat in June's Cove, however, when the "union came in" and won better wages for all, eliminated wage differentials for men and women doing the same job and reduced the gap between male and female hourly wages on different jobs (LJ female 40: 4-5).

Women who entered the labour force were *visibly female*. Working at the plant was hard and the jobs were different for men and women. Women were assigned to jobs that required attention to detail, like shucking crab legs for meat, trimming fish, packing

the final products for the consumer, etc. Men on the other hand, were assigned jobs that ostensibly required physical strength and abilities with machinery, such as butchering fish, lifting pans into the trucks, trucking, operating forklifts, etc. The division of labour in the market conceptualized women and men as *sexed nouns*, as people with particular traits which were compatible with a given task. Men's stamina, physical strength met the requirements of hard work at sea or with machinery and heavy lifting. Women's delicate hands, and attention to detail were more appropriate for fine tasks of processing. In their relationship with the company, men and women are constructed as 'essential beings' with sex-linked, unchanging characteristics.

In her account, Louise does not portray herself as a *noun*, the woman, the mother, the dependent, but rather as the worker whose ability to provide can be seen in the success of her children. Earning an income raised the visibility of her contribution and possibly influenced her own sense of herself beyond the 'homemaker' definer, but not necessarily at the expense of it. She can *act* as a provider and as a homemaker, embracing multiple facets of female identity, taking her essence as *noun* to the *verb* through actions and embodiments of responsibilities. Louise and Elizabeth's actions as providers did not in any way imply their partners' inability to provide. Rather, they imply a partnership, where partners work together for the betterment of the home, irrespective of the internal conflicts that are sure to exist in every home.

What does this say about the attitudes of men and women toward this practice? And what are the jobs that men and women can take on as *verbs*. In my interviews in June's Cove I asked the question using the noun forms for men and women, and the noun forms for jobs (men's and women's jobs). My question prompted three main types of

reactions from men and women with contradictory reactions often coming from the same person. Here, I present them together for analytical purposes and for compatibility of thought, recognizing that the same person can have two different opinions on the same issue, particularly if the situation changes.

The first reaction was in support of traditional 'roles' (nouns) predicated on biology: god's ordinance and old social order as being the best. According to this reaction, women and men are 'equals' but different. Women can be accorded the same rights, so long as this does not contravene the social order; women cannot be expected to do men's work. These narratives question the work women do at the plant in that it can be too hard for them, and because the plant seems to be unable to prevent certain events from happening:

Ah, I don't know if working in the plant would be more men's work than women's work. I mean it's not easy work working in the plant as they say. I mean I've heard women talking about how they're lifting those heavy pans or trays whatever. Well, I mean, that's hard for a woman, isn't it? And well if they had ditches to dig, well that's more of a man's work. I don't know. There's not that much work for a woman outside. Unless it is in the garden. Well she's not getting paid for that. To plant her vegetables and look after them (JBr female 64: 10).

The feminine integrity has to be protected because men are strong, but "women are not built that way."

The second reaction was more in support of shared 'roles' and changes to the old order and the way things are done. They saw women and men as equals, and as having the same ability to perform most jobs. They viewed the separation of men's and women's jobs as artificial and the source of inequalities. Jeffrey A, Steven S, and Benjamin T, for instance, admired women who could "stand for themselves" and who "were not afraid to speak their minds."

I think all women's as good as the next. It's only matter of what they think of themselves. I likes strong women. Like some of them that are ready to speak for themselves or take a challenge or anything like that. The stronger a woman is, the better a community is (JA male 24: 26).

The burden of the proof was placed on women; women had to demonstrate these traits and transcend old feminine notions in order to be respected. Women were to project an image that went beyond "the mommy," but one that did not exclude motherhood. The respect was something that women had to earn; it was not automatically accorded to them as persons, but rather it was accorded to them as modified versions of women or men. Some of the traits were still associated with men: strength, assertiveness, ability to do things. For some men and women, on the other hand, the reverse was also true. As men, some could not get into certain professions that were thought of as "feminine", such as nursing, day-care, or elder-care. Some of the professions that appeal to care-giving traits were usually associated with women.

The third reaction came from those who were not opposed to change *per se* but did not believe that change could easily take place. They believed in some of the innate traits that men and women have which are related to biology. Rights are accorded to both irrespectively of their work, and their gender, but there are fields that are more appropriate to each. My spirited exchange with Jeffrey illustrates this point of view:

SC: Uhm. And ah, in terms of the domestic activities - but how about paid activities, do you see a boundary? Here, in this community, is there something that women don't do in this community?

JA: Okay. Well, say grave diggin'. I'd never ever take a woman grave diggin' with me. 'Cause I know she'd never handle it. It's a shockin' thing to say, but I knows how hard I works when I digs graves. Like up in there in the middle of winter, froze to death with a pick in your hand, beatin' down through a solid piece of ground, froze solid. Like I don't know a woman around that can do it. I never seen a woman. Now there's probably some who can do it, but I've never ever seen one actually that I think that could do it.

SC: Uhm. But that would be the extent of things they wouldn't do!

JA: Yeah. Well, serious manual labour. Except for that, they can do just about anything. They can drive an engine and operate it as good as any man.

SC: Yeah. How about fishing?

JA: Oh, there's a lot fish in the [Cove]. Well, they says they do. I don't know what actually they do when they gets aboard a boat. But a lot of them just sits there and watches, but...

SC: So, you haven't seen any woman actually pull fish out of the water?

JA: No. No.

SC: Uhm. But you wouldn't believe that she would do it or it is just...

JA: Well, like. Now there is women as strong as me. But like I knows what's like to hauls the traps and like, sometimes it takes two large men to haul 'em up. Like a woman probably, there is a woman in the [Cove] and she's only about ninety pounds. And there's no way in the world she can haul it back in seven foot seas. Like there's no way in the world that can be haulin' twine or somethin', yes. But, like, after manual labour, I don't think she can go pick up a hundred pound of fish and go on with it or whatever. There is jobs suited more for men. It's sexist yes, but [laughter]. You're gonna think of me, what an asshole.

S: Not really.

JA: But that's just the way I sees things.

SC: Yeah. Uhm. So in your opinion, what do you think when a woman does a man's job?

JA: Oh I got no problem with it whatsoever. All the power to 'em; if they likes the job, they can do it. I think like jobs like that, any job a man can do, a woman can do.

SC: Uhm.

JA: For like, that kind of job. But when it comes to serious manual labour, I don't know if they can or not. 'Cause I never actually seen - now probably they can do it better than me, but I've never actually seen a woman do it so I can't actually say yes or no, right?

SC: Uhm. So you never seen a woman say, in the plant, lift boxes that a man couldn't?

JA: Well, like there's never been a woman load a truck with sixty-six pound blocks of codfish. All the women do is usually is pack the meat in a pan and the man come over and take it. Now I'm sure there are women in there who can lift the pan and go on with it. Some can lift me on top of the pan and go on with it for that matter. But like it's just not done. And no women ever ask to do it or do do it. So, like, how do you know if they can or not? (JA male 24: 24-25)

In the abstract, people are willing to consider men and women as capable of taking on any job, whether designated as a "male" or "female" job. They also say that men and women have the "right" to choose the job they want to perform. But, the rhetoric has its

limits. When pressed to give examples, some people revert back to essentialist and biological notions and provide examples of jobs that could not be well done by a man (e.g., cleaning or childcare) or by a woman (e.g., gravedigger or butcher). This could be explained by the fact that there is a lack of referents, real examples to compare to. Louise C confirms these statements when she recounts her opinions about work and gender:

SC: So it doesn't matter whether you are a man or a woman or anything-it's just ...

LC: There are jobs like that are men's - that it's a man's job. I mean there's not too many things I haven't done in that plant. But I mean there are things that I wouldn't do. ... I don't care what you say, [men] they're built different. For lifting and stuff like that. But the majority of women I know don't, but it's just that the women are more particular about how they work. The men aren't. The men aren't - it's like cleaning. A man is not going to clean like a woman cleans. Now I can't knock every man, 'cause I mean there [laughs] - I'm not knocking men.

SC: Uhm. What's your opinion of women who do men's jobs?

LC: Ah, I have no problem with it - No one bit. No, if a woman thinks she's able to do it. I think a lot of cases, women think they're capable - it's not the capability - how do I say it - some women think, I don't believe a lot in this liberated bit as I can do a man's job, blah, blah, blah. Because a woman, a woman's body is not built like a man, like I said a while back. ... It's not my cup of tea to want to take and go out there butchering or go out in the -- and beating out pans. ... But if a woman feels she's able to do it, I don't laugh at her.

SC: How about men doing women's jobs?

LC: Ah, no problem in the world. But a man is not as particular as a woman, so if you had to put a man out in that plant on the packing line, you would never, they tried to put men there to shuck the crab out? They tried putting a few men in it? And seeing if it works. They couldn't stand it. They couldn't hack it. They wouldn't do it.

SC: Why not?

LC: They just, ah, I don't know if they looked at it as a woman's job or what - I really don't know. But they just tried it. I mean that was twenty odd years ago. But ah, the men wouldn't do it (LC female 66: 9-10).

As mentioned earlier, I framed my questions with nouns as this is the conventional way society understands gender – as a thing. In some of the accounts men *are* strong, built for hard work, assertive, and likewise women *are* careful and apt at work needing attention to detail, good at cleaning, etc. Their traits are certain, and so is their essence. As things,

fixed objects or nouns, men and women have very little possibility of changing their behaviours and activities. Whereas as *verbs*, which is the way I characterize the more fluid reactions and responses, the possibility for change and transgression is open. The gender division of labour and their gender-linked properties are not absolutes, neither do they provide certainties in their descriptions. Scepticism, fluidity and doubt underlying the verb-like notions create space where individuals interpret and adapt them through a dialogue between traditional and new notions of masculinities and femininities.

Most of the reactions to my questions about men's and women's work were framed in a time when the plant and fishing were able to provide work for everyone. With the advent of the moratorium that reality changed and some of the old patterns were not easily sustainable, even by those who subscribed to them. This was most evident in the homes where men were negotiating their presence and "role" around the house with women who were sometimes absent attending training offered through the government compensation programs.

### **from 'roles' to responsibilities ... *"it's half his dirt"***

When I met MaryAnn, she was married (still is) with three children, two of school age and one just under 6. Her husband had long worked as a crab fisher, and the seasons were very short and therefore he had a lot of time at home. She had been given the option to retrain and leave the fisheries (her job as a plant worker) after more than 15 years of service. It was in this context that she made the following comment:

SC: So have any of the things that we've just mentioned, have they changed in the last 4 years?

MAC: Oh in the past, yeah, in the past 4 years, yeah they have. He's more *ahm*, *ah*. He'll do things, he sees more now, of what I do on a typical day because I was

always at home and it just got done and me being out of the house now, more in school and more in the business and whatever, things don't get done, right? So, he realizes this, this isn't getting done because he's not home and the floor is not swept [laughing] and the dishes ain't done and we generally do all these dishes at supper time and stuff like that and he pitches in more.

...

SC: Can you tell me, where or how did you learn about these rules?

MAC: I, just as a person, I don't design men and women ... if I can wash the dishes, you can wash the dishes. Or if I can do it, he can do it. *It's half his house and half his kids and half his dirt, so, [laughing] he can do it too.* But I don't think, I don't think I got it from, from my family or you know it just happens that way (MAC female 35: 19-20).

*It is half his dirt...* the statement has such poignancy and speaks of a set of negotiations in response to the changes imposed by the moratorium, occurring at many levels and with consequences for all in the family. Four negotiation issues can be extracted from her comments. The first issue deals with training and career and how MaryAnn viewed them. Like other women and men in June's Cove, she took training as part of TAGS. With her training she obtained a loan and was able to start a small business in a structure her husband built adjoining their home. Self-employed, she enjoyed greater independence than in the past and was able to put her creativity to work. However, she also had to dedicate more time to make the business succeed. At the time of our interview, MaryAnn had been running her business for over 5 months and in her own words, she "was doing well." She needed to negotiate with herself and her family the time that she needed to dedicate to the business as shown below.

The second negotiation issue touches on her view of herself in taking the training course and opening up her own business. For her it was important to see herself as co-provider for the household. Participation in the labour force is important to many women, if not most women. Some researchers have argued that part of the motivation for them

taking on paid work comes from economic pressure; the two-income per family imperative (Baker 2001: 98). However, working for pay also gives women the opportunity to define themselves beyond the care-giving injunctions imposed on their sex, despite the fact that the majority of women still find themselves concentrated in sex-typed jobs (Baker 2001: 99).

This leads to the third issue, compromises and negotiations about rules and careers. For MaryAnn, negotiating her access to training, to the freedom to establish her business and to paid work outside the home, required a compromise at home. This compromise meant that her house would not be “as clean” as the homes of others, or as clean as it had been before. Growing up in June's Cove, making this compromise must have been difficult. Women in June's Cove, almost without exception, pride themselves on cleanliness. There is an unspoken, yet strong rule that compels every woman to clean. In my host home, for instance, the vacuum cleaner was constantly on, and Karen, the mother, cleaned and wiped the kitchen counters numerous times in the same evening. This phenomenon seemed to be common to many houses I visited. MaryAnn was aware that her house did not meet the local standards and she mentioned this during the interview. She also emphasized how little she cared about people's opinion at that particular moment in time. It was a compromise.

The fourth issue stems out of that compromise, and shows the relational character of negotiation. A clean house is more than a symbol of good homemaking and for many employed women maintaining a clean house is an added burden. Women's entrance into and survival in the labour force has increased family incomes, but this unfortunately has not been matched by a reduction in the burden carried by women with domestic tasks

(Baker 2001: 96-115). In the case of MaryAnn, she and her husband discussed the best ways to keep the house clean and care for the kids in light of their new work situations. As indicated in her comment, it became an issue of *whose dirt is it, anyway, and who has to clean it*. This simple question and assertion strips away the naturalness of cleaning as a feminine task and turns it into a *responsibility* that should be shared by all those who create dirt or mess irrespective of gender. It appeals to the *verb* part of identity as the noun is stripped of its defining power and, hence, anyone in the family can do this work. After all *it was half his dirt*. MaryAnn's husband was able and willing to share the responsibilities and he was not the only one.

Thomas A, a 57 year old carpenter, also presents the verb-like attitudes and notions towards the domestic division of labour. He said that in his house everyone does what is needed when the person is at home; for instance if he is home and it is time to prepare dinner, he cooks, or anyone who is in the house for that matter. In his words, "work is not decided, whoever is home do it. We don't plan our lives, we just do it. If I am home, I cook; if she is home, she cooks. No plans." In response to this statement, I asked,

SC: So, if she is home and you're home, she cooks?

TA: Oh yeah, usually yeah! (emphatic response)

SC: If she's not here, then you cook.

TA: Yes.

He explained to me that he and his wife had come to this arrangement since they both were employed and therefore the housework had to be shared as well. He also explained that his views on housework are not widely shared in the community.

Of the men I met, most were prepared to share responsibilities in the home, in part because they had more time at home, and also because the women they lived with did not adhere to the view that a clean house alone defined a good woman; having a dirty house was no longer only an embarrassment for the woman. Some older codes and values still prevailed but people adhered to them in ways that did not prevent them from making a living (moms working for the home) and by redefining, to some degree, who was responsible for cleaning and domestic work and why.

Men seem to be more adaptable than they are given credit for; yet their adaptability is not recorded. This may be due to the lack of ethnographic studies on men that go beyond the traditional description of their 'roles' as fishers, plant workers or simply the oppressors of women. Young female narrators reported that some of their male peers were not very interested in participating in housework. The young married men I met reported that they were very much part of the house work and they demonstrated real insight into the working of the house. In contrast, men older than 65 appeared to be more entrenched in the old ways and relied heavily on their wives for daily care (meals and a clean home).

Steven S, a twenty-three year old father, unemployed at the time of the interview, had this to say in response to my question about whether there was a clear boundary that separated the things that women and men did: "Well, I s'ppose, I don't know. It -- there is boundaries there, but there's room for compromise too, and stuff like this." The room for compromise refers to being able to take on tasks and responsibilities as required independently of the "role". He was looking after his daughter as we proceeded with the interview. He told me that some of his male, married friends exhibited similar attitudes

and behaviours in terms of housework and responsibilities around the house. Not all of them, he warned: "... more are not, some more just the old fashion type. [laughing]." I asked if he could tell me to what he attributed this change in views and behaviour.

Without pausing to think, his instant reply was: "It's more school, than anything." He reconfirmed his reply when I insisted, "you think school is the main difference," he said: "Yeah, I think so" (SS male 23: 18).

Steven's comments suggest that school may be influencing young people's views of gender. Having these new ideas to fall back on in times of change may offer men viable alternatives to cope with and sustain their homes in a context of change. There was a pride in being able to share in the maintenance of the home. Some older men resorted to similar strategies to make use of their free time. Albert A, a 50 year old fisher displaced by the cod moratorium, related the following in relation to his participation in housework in the mid-1990s. He had already noted that they share tasks, but there were some things that he did not do, such as "washing dishes." But for everything else he said, he and his wife share most tasks:

SC: So the division of the chores in the house has always been the same?

AA: Yeah, probably. I helps more now than I ever did cause I got the time on my hands. But before that, now like I said I wasn't here long enough. Hardly. Only just to shower, get a bite to eat, and 3 or 4 hours rest. That's when we were using the longliner and trap boat. I never had time to really breathe, right? But now we got all this time on our hands, you know, I helps her all I can and the things she wants to do, I don't say nothing. I just leaves her alone if she wants to do it, and she's happy at it, that's good enough for me (AA male 50: 42-3).

The men I met, including Steven and Albert, conceptualized and referred to their participation in housework as *help*. This is significant considering that their participation in housework is a departure from long held practices where men did not do much in the

domestic realm but also indicates that housework is still considered to be primarily women's responsibility.

Elizabeth recounts the major changes she has seen in her lifetime. I asked her to compare the way housework was divided in her house to the practices of the past and she exclaimed, "right the opposite."

SC: Can you compare the way things were done in your house then, say to your parents' house? How does it compare?

EP: Oh my, right the opposite really. Because I don't know, like my brothers or my father ever taking responsibility for cleaning or doing the dishes or the laundry or anything like that, them years it was the women. Now, the men would bring in the wood of course; you'd burn wood them times. They'd bring the wood or they'd bring the water, but that was it; the women did the rest. But I'm glad I didn't get a husband like that I wouldn't have kept him I don't think [laughing] (EP female 66: 31).

New practices offer a glimpse of change not only in the fact that men are prepared to take on domestic tasks to fill their free time, but also because some of them are doing this to enable their partners to pursue their interests and careers. Men's practices, as described by Albert, Steven and other narrators, were not so much new, as less rare or isolated than in the years prior to 1992. For instance, Jeffrey remembers his grandfather's baking and cooking:

On my father's side, my grandfather pretty well took care of everything.

SC: Yeah? How so? Why?

JA: He baked bread, and my grandmother was a hard case [laughs], but he'd bake the bread, and bake pies and when he was home, he used to like, always huntin' and goin' in the woods and probably spend three or four days every week in the woods.

Lavinia J related similar stories about her brother who lived "on his own, rearing two children on his own and you could eat off his floors. He does everything himself" (LJ: 33).

A number of significant points emerge from these narrations in relation to the conceptualization of “roles” (as nouns) and responsibilities (as verbs) that could be enacted by whomever had the time. Related to this is the change in the conceptualization of gender identities as more active processes which can be adjusted to the changing circumstances. Underlying the changes in the conceptualization of gender is a change in the view of what is work and where it can take place. Corey, a 40 year old carpenter, spoke of “the work my wife does in the house” and “my work as a carpenter.” In his opinion both activities are considered work, and both of them have their own value. I heard similar views and opinions from many other narrators.

The previous section discussed the transition from ‘roles’ to ‘responsibilities’ using the metaphor of nouns and verbs to understand the distinction between ‘essential’ and more fluid notions linking gender and work. Narrators engage in a process of interpretation of the practices and norms they know and often enact bodily performances that differ from expectations. Their attitudes also reflect this active interpretation as their opinions do not hold onto certainties, exhibiting instead ambiguities, contradictions, and uncertainties. Men and women are learning new roles and new patterns for the division of labour in the home that are based on respect, interdependence, and the need to adjust. Notions of fairness also play a role in the division of labour and how it is practiced – even split between those who think it is fair when the woman takes on the majority of the housework and those who think that it is fair only when the housework is equally divided. This latter group advocated the need for change in order to make it more equal. In short, there are many versions and enactments of masculinities and femininities at home and in June's Cove at large.

## men and women – masculine and feminine

Here is a composite sketch of the women and men I met in June's Cove in mid-1990s. It includes the testimonies and depictions found in the literature, some of which still in part applied. The depictions are not exhaustive, they are meant to provide a glimpse of the rich diversity of gender identities in June's Cove.

June's Cove's *Women* are many women, with many attributes and exhibit various versions of femininity. She is a woman who is a good homemaker. She is a good mother – this is a “calling,” mothers are devoted and self-sacrificing. She is nurturing. She lives for her children. She is proud of her clean and orderly home. She is strong and she worries. She is a “skipper.” She is a fisher. She is responsible and well-balanced. She is the private figure of the home; very religious and the repository of morals and culture for the family. She is a healer. She is the facilitator and mediator – the one who resolves conflicts. She is a hunter, and provides through vegetable gardening, and snaring rabbits. She is a plant worker. She works with schedules around childcare and child-related responsibilities. She is a provider and breadwinner. She is an extremely hard worker. She is open to explore other employment alternatives (in fact, they are faster to adopt alternatives). She pays attention to detail. Ideally, she is not afraid of trying new things and taking on new challenges (e.g., speaking in public and standing up for her rights and in many cases those of her family members).

A similarly complex picture emerges of *Men*. He is a fisher who braves the odds presented by a hostile climate and geography. He is a hunter and provider. He is a nurturing father. He is a stay-at-home dad. He cooks. He is the only care-giver in the

house. He is a repairman. He is a gardener. He is a farmer. He is a carpenter. He is a homemaker and participates in housework and childcare. He is open to explore other employment alternatives outside of the fishery. He is in charge of any heavy work around the house (building, constructing, lifting). He is the authority in the house. He is aggressive and assertive, tough and confident. He is a fighter. He thinks that women belong in the house, that women and children need his protection. The stages, the wharf, and to a lesser extent the bar are his places of social gathering. He is the public figure of the family and household. He pays little attention to detail. Women see the ideal man as loving children, treating them well, responsible, loves his freedom, hard worker, takes care of his family, as a partner and companion.

Men and women are growing into spaces where they enact interpreted versions of themselves. The path is not smooth, and presents challenges to those engaged. For instance, Corey told me that as much as he wanted to ‘help’, he felt that what he did *was never good enough*.

SC: Yeah. How did you get to know what part you should do or you shouldn't do?

CB: [laughs] Well, I mean with Sarah. I knew what part I should do and I shouldn't do because Sarah is like her mother - she's very particular.

SC: Oh. Her mother.

CB: Oh my mother was the same thing. My mother was a perfectionist too. Sarah is a perfectionist. She wants everything just so. Everything in its place. Everything belongs in its place. Not my place [laughter]. I could not do things good enough for Sarah (CB male 40: 18).

This goes back to the so-called men's inability to pay attention to detail. What this means for Sarah is that if she wants his ‘help’, she would have to ‘compromise’ on the type of help she receives. Some women prefer not to receive the help, rather than dealing with their partners' incompetence. Some researchers have argued that men's so-called

incompetence is sometimes used as an excuse to avoid participation in housework (Coltrane 1995: 257-271).

Some women have learned to accept help in the shape it comes and make compromises, as they value the relief that sharing duties brings from complete responsibility and having a *second shift*. Concomitantly, these women are also creating in their minds new conceptions of masculinity. Notions of femininity are also being challenged through this process; notions of how nice your house should look are also being compromised. The way they reconcile this is by saying to fictional critics, as with MaryAnn, “half of it is *his* dirt.”

Men who are interested in taking on housework responsibilities also face criticisms from their peers who do not want to break their loyalty to traditional ways of organizing labour. Some men face teasing and mockery from peers who consider their participation in housework to be feminizing. Benjamin recalls instances when his friends teased a mutual friend for doing housework. One of them suggested he should wear a skirt if he liked doing women’s work so much. He explained to me that it takes a lot of internal self-assurance to resist the pressure many men face to conform to traditional behaviours. He also explained that part of his strength may have come from seeing his father clean the house while his mother was in church. He also expressed great admiration for the work women do and has always “helped around the house,” helping both his mother and his grandmother.

**factors, trends, currents ... a few words to conclude**

Regardless of the shape it takes, change is perceptible in the gender attitudes and behaviours of some women and men in June's Cove. The pace of this change cannot be predicted, neither can we predict the direction it will take in the longer term. In the mid-1990s the trend was toward gender behaviours with less defined socially accepted markers, and borders. A number of currents were influencing the change of which I have mentioned a few in the course of the discussion: one factor was the **cod moratorium** since its arresting power was felt at economic, social, psychological and emotional levels in June's Cove. Other important currents appear to have been **education**; many narrators commented on the fact that schools are giving children ideas that are not part of local beliefs. Equally significant are **social policies** that transpose values from the contexts where the lobbying occurred to June's Cove. One example would be parental leave, which gives fathers the option to share childcare responsibilities without losing their job. More locally developed, yet just as critical to this change are processes of **valuation and validation**. Most men and women narrators expressed in their comments a sense of the value of work, both paid and unpaid. This, in my view, accounts for the flexibility in taking on certain responsibilities in the home for a man to stay at home while a partner studies and for a woman to pursue training to continue being co or sole providers in their homes. Validation is also found in the actions and behaviours of others, as more and more men engage in housework at all ages, especially those affected by the cod moratorium. These actions, which at one time appear to have been relatively rare, could become more

generalized, and slowly feed into expectations. Transgression of the gender categories becomes the norm, but it is not easy to find the sole impetus for it.

As Foucault reminds us, as categories are transgressed and changed through actions of interpretation and resistance, new entrenchments will emerge and the new categories will become the target of new resistances and new challenges.

"Foucault holds power needs resistance as one of its fundamental conditions of operation. It is through the articulation of points of resistance that power spreads through the social field. But it is also, of course, through resistance that power is disrupted. Resistance is both an element of the functioning of power and a source of its perpetual disorder" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 147, as cited by Faith 1994: 47).

This discussion has hardly scratched the surface of issues related to masculinities and femininities in June's Cove in the mid-1990's, and there is need for more research in various areas if we are to gain a better understanding of the complex processes attending gender identity formation and construction in a variety of contexts. However, the take away message is: a) that masculinities and femininities are experienced by everyone; gender identity is the inescapable experience; b) masculinities and femininities are relational; they are defined by and through relationships; c) masculinities and femininities are constantly evolving, although certain crises serve to speed up and highlight change and perhaps establish a more certain causality (i.e., you are able to attribute an effect to a particular cause) that is generally impossible to establish among currents that operate coincidentally.

The point of this chapter is to stress that our knowledge of gender (masculinities and femininities) is usually connected to particular social practices, and these inform our attitudes, which in turn guide our actions and behaviour in particular contexts. As our

contexts change, changes in our beliefs, practices and notions can also occur. In June's Cove the cod moratorium added impetus to processes already in motion. People in rural communities like June's Cove are constantly negotiating their knowledge and traditions in their daily interactions, and interpreting enactments of gender.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### To be gendered: Fusing the Horizons

The stories and narrations presented in the preceding chapters reveal the active engagement of men and women in discursive social strategies to understand, interpret, contest and re-create definitions of masculinity, femininity, work and marriage in June's Cove. These strategies are in part the adaptive mechanisms they use to cope with the changes brought on by the cod moratorium through a dialogue of past and present values, attitudes and practices. They are also the result of the concerted influence of social currents occurring in Canadian society at large and changes in local social and economic conditions.

Working with a collection of very diverse and often contradictory ideas on what *is* and what *ought to be* a man, a woman, marriage and domestic responsibilities, in this thesis I present a social analysis that shines the spotlight on issues usually subsumed by generalizations and conventional notions and practices of gender. In doing so, I provide an alternative reading of events that followed the implementation of the cod moratorium, especially as they relate to gender identities, attitudes and practices in June's Cove.

Chapters two and three present the theoretical and methodological basis for the data collection and analysis. The theoretical referents for this study are post-structuralism and feminist thought as these offer the tools to conceptualize meaning, discourse, historicity, and the instability of signifiers and subjectivity. Qualitative research techniques, including semi-structured interviewing and participant observation constitute the most appropriate methodological tools to capture voices in their diversity, reaching beyond pre-set, fixed categories while opening spaces for nuances and shades of meaning

in dialogue, conversation and interpretative acts. These methods thus complement post-structural and feminist thought and analysis.

The findings presented in chapters four and five examine narrators' answers to the central question explored in this thesis: By the mid-1990s had the gender identities of men and women been influenced or affected by the cod moratorium? If so, how? Chapter four discusses the notions, attitudes and practices associated with partner selection, marriage and family in June's Cove. Drawing on narrations and experiences, the analysis contrasts views and attitudes in the past and present to expose processes of change, interpretation and adaptation of marriage over time. Chapter five examines the discursive gender strategies of women and men as they meet the challenges of shifting employment opportunities by negotiating responsibilities in the home and at work. The changes they described, though necessary, are not easy and these involve a process by which women and men adopt interpreted notions of femininity and masculinity, and regarding who should take on the provider and care-giving roles. The personal experiences of gender interpretation show how women and men responded to the interplay of concurrent processes such as the cod moratorium, education, social policies, and the local values and institutions through processes of valuation and validation.

In Chapters 5 and 6, women and men can be seen defining themselves beyond traditional definitions. For instance, some women defined themselves beyond their duties as caregivers and transcended traditional responsibilities for maintaining a clean house by rationalizing that "it is half his dirt." At the heart of this statement is the idea that responsibilities for care-giving, domestic work and financial support are shared duties for the parties involved. Some men were also changing their conceptions of themselves and

the women in their lives (friends, wives, siblings, daughters, etc). This process of change and transcendence was still unfolding at the time of the study. Consequently, the findings provide provisional and ambiguous answers to the central question of this thesis.

The story presented here is the result of my witnessing, listening, dialoguing and re-telling the stories I heard from women and men in June's Cove in the mid-1990s. I have looked at negotiations between men and women in the community and at the changing notions, attitudes, experiences and practices of women and men in relation to themselves and each other in a shifting social climate mediated by the cod moratorium. I have explored some of the details related to how women and men negotiate space in the home, notions of marriage and “roles” and responsibilities as they respond to new pressures and demands. The thesis contributes to our understanding of how women and men cope with change as they fashion and create social meaning. I wish to conclude by adding some final thoughts and suggesting a number of areas and themes for further research.

### **sites and conditions**

The influence that the cod moratorium had in the decisions that women and men made around gender practices is undeniable. The disruption caused by the moratorium produced a loss of traditional sites that sustained traditional gender ‘roles,’ while creating new sites where new practices, once thought of as marginal and odd for their occurrence (a man working in the home and in charge of care-giving; a woman moving from co-provider to sole provider), became more common.

The voices and views of the people were not analyzed to represent the occupational groups identified within the community, as the aim of this study was not to establish correlations between views and occupation. Instead, common and diverging themes were found across the whole sample and used to expose the shades of meaning and attitudes present that often get lost behind the *general*. Further research would be needed to look and establish links and correlations between occupation and gender identity.

### **gender knowledge and practices**

Gender enactments are the interpretation of knowledge acquired in given contexts through practices of everyday life. When contexts change, as it occurred in June's Cove during the moratorium, those practices change and the knowledge about them. From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this research confirm some of the postulates of post-structuralism as these relate to gender including, in particular, the importance of treating gender as an ongoing, relational, never-completed *process* (verb), and not as a pre-set, unchanging *concept* (noun). From this perspective, we can see that the production of gender involves actions based on interpretation, transgression, contestation and change.

The *decentralized knowledges* of June's Cove became more visible because of the moratorium as women and men in June's Cove interpreted, contested, and enacted new gender practices drawing from local customs and practices as well as information available to them from their wider society. Social practices were changed through the challenge of conventional approaches, and by new practices becoming the target of newer

challenges as they are incorporated into widespread conventions through a never-ending process of interpretation, adaptation and re-interpretation. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer offers a useful concept to help understand this process. He describes this as a “fusion of horizons”, as the past and present come together in the form of knowledge and interpreted discursive strategies to yield new horizons transcending old meanings/significations (1975: 267-274). The knowledge about gender practices for future generations will contain what was new in the mid-1990s and the social trends of the day and thus new knowledge would inform new practices as these are constantly changing.

### **diversity within, new referents**

The moratorium has also served to highlight the *diversity within* genders and the community as it brought to the fore some of the discursive practices and transgressions of people testing the limits of local definitions of masculinity, femininity, and marriage. In the face of the disruptive force of the moratorium and its direct effects on the occupational structure (un and underemployment), men and women developed new, or resorted to non-conventional patterns of division of labour in the home and outside. They turned ‘roles’ into responsibilities, and began to share tasks. New or uncommon practices create new referents and provide validation for those who decide to enact them.

The force of change is always matched by resistance. As the discussion in the preceding chapters has shown, men and women tend to change slowly and some resist change. While in the abstract, people are willing to accept that men and women are capable of taking on any job, whether designated as “male” or “female,” when pressed to give examples, they tend to revert back to essentialist and biological notions and provide

examples of jobs that could not be done well by a man (e.g., childcare) or by a woman (e.g., gravedigger or butcher).

As noted in chapter four, locally developed notions and values are critical to change as they provide *validation* to new practices. For young men, the behaviour of older men may provide markers for what can be done. Older men who cook or participate in housework are strong images to resort to for local reference. Actions which had been rare, could become more generalized, and slowly feed into expectations. Social and economic conditions in Canada, as well as cultural changes that are spread through school curricula, media, and policies are strong factors or currents influencing the notions, views and conceptualizations.

The analysis of the gender strategies of men and women in June's Cove reveals the hermeneutical elements that lie at the heart of the interpretations they engage in to appropriate what is significant from their past and present in anticipation of a meaningful future. Using marriage, or gender identities (femininities and masculinities) as sites for contestation and a mechanism for adaptation, individuals enter a hermeneutic process of interpretation and creation of meaning within social institutions through the juxtaposition of their own knowledge and values with those from the larger society in order to reconfigure their reality. The reconfigurations involve changes in the expectations of women and men and a softening of the boundaries around gender roles to make them more compatible with new socio-economic demands. Processes of re-conceptualization and the redefinition of social institutions originate in the interpreted understanding and practices that form social interactions, enactments and discursive strategies deployed by individuals or groups of individuals in response to changing environments. There is a

dialectical relationship between social interactions and the social context in which these occur, such as the one presented by the cod moratorium and the fishery crisis more generally.

This thesis has barely scratched the surface of issues related to masculinities and femininities in the context of social change. More research is needed if we are to gain a better understanding of the complex processes attending gender identity formation and construction in rural Newfoundland and Labrador and other areas and contexts. I would like to emphasize, however, that our knowledge of gender (masculinities and femininities) is usually connected with particular contexts and social practices, and these inform our attitudes as researchers, which in turn guide our actions and behaviours. As contexts change, there will be pressure to change social practices. In June's Cove the cod moratorium added impetus to gendered processes already in motion due to changes in wider society. The men and women of June's Cove, like those elsewhere, are constantly negotiating their knowledge and traditions in their daily interactions, and through their interpreted enactments of gender. It would be interesting and very valuable to see how their views have change in the intervening years. A 10 year anniversary visit might prove worthwhile to write comparative analysis.

### **areas for future research**

Future research could add to our understanding of the complex processes attending gender identity formation and construction in June's Cove and in Newfoundland as a whole. Gender identity is experienced simultaneously from many angles, and this provides many opportunities for research. Thus, future research on gender identity could focus on:

- Common-law couples in small communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, looking at incidence, views and practices.
- Relationships, if any, between the presence and absence of parental figures and masculinities and femininities.
- The processes by which men learn to be fathers, and women learn to be mothers in Newfoundland fishing communities; and how values related to parenting change over time, and why.
- Changes in the type and levels of involvement by fathers in fishery-dependent communities in childcare, whether they prefer more direct activities (playing with them, attending a game or presentation, etc), over the more indirect and repetitive tasks (washing clothes, preparing lunch, cleaning their room, etc) required to raise and care for a child.
- Changes over time in the meaning of the term “fishing community” for local people and in the context to which local people identify with this notion or feel left out. Also, what are the processes associate with integration, belonging and marginalization? Are these changing over time?
- It would be important to analyze any of this issues considering the issue of religion and the type of influence it has in shaping gender values.

### **final words**

Sifting through the literature on the “impact” of the moratorium was interesting as this informed the development of my research question and the final focus of the thesis. Past research raises questions about the categories used to understand the impact of the

moratorium (Robinson 1994; Ommer 1998; Sinclair 1999; Neis 1997; Williams 1997). It has also drawn attention to women's entitlement to benefits in government adjustment programs associated with the moratorium (Neis & Williams 1997; Ommer 1998), and has lent a voice and created forums for dialogue between activists, government officials and academics in search for solutions (Neis 1999). This study contributes to these efforts, and it builds on existing works on issues of gender and women in the fisheries. The review of the literature also revealed that the notions used in the debate needed to be expanded.

This thesis offers an alternate reading of the impact of the cod moratorium on people in small fishery-dependent communities. It also expands the lexicon used to describe gender identities, issues and practices in fishing communities in order to reflect more fully the diversity of these communities and the range of issues confronting local, working age women and men.

The thesis applies extends the notion of gender and gender identities beyond their more conventional use—as analytical categories applied to explain women's subordination in patriarchy. This study looks at issues of gender in a more integrated manner than is typical of the existing research. This integration comes from considering the *relational* character of gender (which means including men and women as relational individuals) and the *diversity of gendered voices* (i.e. masculinities and femininities in the *plural*). I deliberately omitted any analysis of power relations because in my view there is enough emphasis on the antagonism between “the sexes” in the existing research on gender and the fisheries crisis. And what is needed is more work into increasing understanding between “the sexes” or into building bridges or spaces for those men who want to enact a masculinity outside of “patriarchy.”

While, I do recognize the power imbalances in these communities and elsewhere in western society, as well as the need to raise awareness about them, I also believe that as long as we hold essentialist notions about men and women, we will not find the path to harmony or equality. An expanded lexicon may result in the recognition of behaviours that do not fall neatly in old constructs/concepts. And this, in turn, may have some positive influence on policy if used to provide more complex, and richer pictures of communities. It may also help in the struggle for equality as it permits us to identify the spaces where positive change is already occurring, and recognize more than one type of man and woman, masculinity and femininity. We need to focus on points of *disarticulation* of “patriarchy” in order to defeat it.

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## Appendix 1

### PARTICIPANT'S PROFILE

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudoname: \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth place: \_\_\_\_\_

Residence pattern:

since birth \_\_\_\_\_

(community/town size)

\_\_\_\_\_ till \_\_\_\_\_ big, medium, little, rural

Special comment: (military family)

Birth order: 1st \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd \_\_\_\_\_ 3rd \_\_\_\_\_ 4th \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

How many brothers \_\_\_\_\_ and sisters \_\_\_\_\_?

#### Parents

Mother age \_\_\_\_\_, alive (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_ died in what year \_\_\_\_\_

father age \_\_\_\_\_, alive (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_ died in what year \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status (parents): married \_\_\_\_\_ divorced \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_

mother remarried? \_\_\_\_\_ when (date) \_\_\_\_\_

father remarried? \_\_\_\_\_ when (date) \_\_\_\_\_

lived with mother between ages \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

lived with father between ages \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

lived with other relatives? \_\_\_\_\_ when? \_\_\_\_\_

Present occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: which was the last grade of schooling you did?

elementary \_\_\_\_\_ secondary \_\_\_\_\_ college \_\_\_\_\_

#### Marital status and history:

married what year: \_\_\_\_\_

divorced what year: \_\_\_\_\_

remarried what year: \_\_\_\_\_

remarried what year: \_\_\_\_\_

common law since: \_\_\_\_\_

**Children:**

(ages and sex)

name: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ sex: \_\_\_\_\_ now living: \_\_\_\_\_

name: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ sex: \_\_\_\_\_ now living: \_\_\_\_\_

name: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ sex: \_\_\_\_\_ now living: \_\_\_\_\_

name: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ sex: \_\_\_\_\_ now living: \_\_\_\_\_

name: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ sex: \_\_\_\_\_ now living: \_\_\_\_\_

name: \_\_\_\_\_ age: \_\_\_\_\_ sex: \_\_\_\_\_ now living: \_\_\_\_\_

**Religion:**

How religious: strong \_\_\_ moderate \_\_\_ inactive \_\_\_ indifferent \_\_\_

How often worships: daily, weekly, monthly, several times a year

## Appendix 2

### INTERVIEWEE RELEASE FORM

#### THE IMPACT OF THE GROUND FISH MORATORIUM ON GENDER IDENTITIES IN A NEWFOUNDLAND FISHING COMMUNITY

The present form is to provide you with brief information about this research project, its objectives, and the conditions surrounding this interview. So please read the form carefully and sign if you agree to take part in it.

The present research project is sponsored by the Institute of Social and Economic Research and the Sociology Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland. The primary objective of this research will be to examine the extent and nature of the impact of the cod moratorium on the lives of people in the Community of Hant's Harbour. The results of the proposed research will be part of my Master's thesis, which will contribute to a better understanding of processes and strategies used by individuals (women and men) to cope with the changes brought about by the fishery crisis.

Your participation in this project is voluntary, and you may choose to end it at any time. You are free to refuse to answer questions, or comment on a particular topic, or to offer opinions on issues and subjects not covered in this interview that you consider relevant. In order to ensure accuracy and authenticity of the information, I would prefer to tape record the interviews. However, you are welcome to let me know when to turn the tape recorder off, or what information you want off the record. I will ensure that all comments are treated and kept in the strictest confidentiality.

I would be grateful if you would sign this form to show that you are aware of its contents. Your assistance in this project is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Silvia Caicedo  
M.A. Candidate,  
Department of Sociology

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to take part in the aforementioned project.

(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

### RELEASE FORM FOR ARCHIVAL DEPOSIT

In the course of this research project, I will be interviewing a number of community residents. Excerpts of interviews will appear as part of the final draft of my Master's thesis. Transcription of interviews, however, will bear no resemblance to the participants' name or identifying characteristics.

Tape recording this interview not only ensures the accuracy of the information collected, but also enables the researcher to focus her attention on the questions asked and your responses. The information you provide would be very valuable for other researchers as well. Therefore, if you agree, and so permit, a copy of this interview tape could be stored in the Folklore Archives of Memorial University. I have made provisional arrangements, provided you consent, to store the tapes and transcriptions with the Folklore Archives. I have been assured that only bonafide researchers would have access to the materials and only for approved research.

Storing this interview with the Folklore Archives at Memorial University is one of the options to dispose of this sensitive material. You can also consider the destruction of the tape upon completion of the transcription, or you may choose to allow me to retain the tape for my exclusive use. If you wish, you could also receive a copy of the interview tape.

Would you please indicate your choice (or choices) by checking the appropriate line(s) below, and signing this form.

Thanks for your assistance and help in this project.

Sincerely,

Silvia Caicedo  
M.A. Candidate,  
Department of Sociology

I, hereby, authorize:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Placement of tape in Folklore Archive  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Allow retention by researcher only  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Destroy the tape upon transcription  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Provide me with copy of interview tape

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

#### VARIANT 1: For Fishers

Introduction: This research project is sponsored by the Institute of Social and Economic Research and the Sociology Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland. The primary objective of this research will be to analyze the extent and nature of the impact of the cod moratorium on the lives of people in the Community of Hant's Harbour. The results of this research will be part of my Master's thesis, which will contribute to a better understanding of processes and strategies used by individuals (men and women) to cope with the changes brought about by the fishery crisis.

#### EXPERIENCE IN THE FISHERY

Let's begin by talking about your experience in the fishery.

Can you please tell me:

Age when you started fishing? With whom?

Who taught you how to fish?

Have you received any formal training in fishing? if yes, what type, and where?

Why did you decide to fish?

How long have you fished?

Last season fished?

Have you always fished in this community/region? If not, can you tell me the names of the places where you worked before and the length of time for each place?

Have you been the skipper in a boat? If yes, for how many years?

Have you been a crew member? For how many years?

Did your mother/father fish? If yes, how long has your family been in the fishery? If not, what did they do?

What other activities did you do for a living? What other jobs did you have? When do you perform these other activities?

Do you hunt? What do you hunt? Who do you hunt with? Why do you hunt: for food, pleasure.

If I was to ask you what it means to you to be a fisher, what would you tell me?

#### Fishing licences

What type of fishing licenses have you owned in your career?

Can you tell me when you acquired each one of them?

Were they part-time or full-time?

Special ( supplementary license)

Have you sold any of your licenses?, Which one(s)?, to whom  
government, other fisher?

Have you ever fished for species that did not require a license? Which ones?

Do you know what is involved in the license allocation process?

**(prompt: community/public meetings, draws, etc.)**

### **Vessel, Gear and Fishing Property characteristics**

What types of fishing vessels have you ever owned?

For each:

- a) rigged for : seining? otter trawl? etc.
- b) length
- c) capacity
- d) material : wood, steel, fibre-glass
- e) value
- f) equipment? loran C, GPS, echo sounder, VHF, radar.

What type of gear have you ever owned?

- a) cod traps? number, size.
- b) gillnets? number of strings(nets).
- c) line trawls? number per line.
- d) crab pots? number, type.
- e) handline? number.
- f) jiggers?
- g) capelin trap? number, size
- h) salmon trap? number, size.
- i) squid trap? number, size.
- j) purse seines? number, size.
- k) other-- specify.

### **FISH PLANT EXPERIENCE**

The following questions are about your experience in plant work.

When did you get involved in plant work for the first time?

Where? Why did you choose to work at the plant?

What species did/do you work with?

What jobs did you do at the plant? And for how long each?

Do/did you feel that you have/had any control over your work?

How many women work in the plant? How many men?

Were these numbers the same before July 1992? If not, how are they different? **Prompt:**  
***more women then/now, more men then/now?***

Can you tell me about the jobs that men women did in the plant when you started?

What types of work do women do in the plant today?

What types of work do men?

What shifts do women work on?

When work is scarce who are the first ones to be laid off? *Prompt: younger, older, men, women, what type of jobs are less necessary.*

Have you or any of your co-workers experienced any disease or ailment related to the work you do at the plant? If yes, can you tell me what? **Prompt: allergies, colds, breathing problems, asthma, etc.**

Can you tell me what species of seafood you (or your co-worker were working with? **Prompt: ground fish, shell fish (crab, lobster), other types of seafood.**

How spread is it? How many cases have you heard of?

Has anyone complained about it? How does one proceed to complain? How would you go about it? Does the union get involved? How? What kinds of responses do you receive from?

Describe the relation between workers at the plant?

How are the relation between workers and management? Have these relation changed over time? If yes, why?

What other activities did/do you do for a living? What other jobs did/do you have? Can you tell me when did/do you perform them?

Do you hunt? What do you hunt for? Who do you hunt with? Why do you hunt: food, pleasure?

Can you tell me what it means to you to be a plant worker? Of all the jobs you have had, which one do you feel identified with?

## KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

We will now move to the skills and knowledge that you acquired in your occupation(s).

What knowledge and skills are required for fishing?

**Probe for: boat-building, gear -making and repair, knowledge of grounds, tides movement, winds, fish movement and migration, processing fish, marketing, etc.**

Where and how did you acquire the knowledge and the skills needed for these jobs?

Did you ever work making/curing fish?

When was the first time you participated in the making of the fish? Who was in charge of making fish?

What do you need to know to be able to make/cure fish?

Do you know how to prepare fish or other types of sea food?

Who taught you, how did you learn about it?

Would you pass this knowledge to your children?

Would you teach your children the skills you acquired fishing or working at the plant?

Do you like fish/ sea food in general? How often do you eat it? Where do you get it from? Would you eat the products that come out of the plant? Why, or why not?

## FISHERY CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT

Let's now talk about the fishery crisis and its impact.

Let me begin by asking you, what role has fishing played in the life of this community in the past?

How about the present? Does fishing have any role to play in the life of this community today? Can you explain that to me?

Can you tell me what is your relationship with the fishery, or with fishing in general?

***Probe for degree of identification with the fishery.***

Four years ago a moratorium was imposed on cod fishing, can you tell me how in your opinion this moratorium has affected the community?

has it placed a lot of people out of work?

have people left the community?

has it pushed people toward crab fishery as a consequence?

has it created divisions among people?

Please describe to me what a good fishing season was like before the crisis.

Personally, how has the moratorium affected you, and your family?

Please, describe to me a regular day in your life before the moratorium? Can you also describe a regular day today?

In your experience, when do you think the fishery crisis began? ***Probe for whether the crisis began with the moratorium?***

Were you able to predict the crisis in any way? What were the signs that led you to predict the crisis?

***Probe for signs:***

- a) changes in the stocks
- b) low landings
- c) quality and size of the fish
- d) water temperature, etc.

How would you explain these changes?

In your view, was there anything that could have prevented the crisis? Explain.

Presently, this community has an on-going crab fishery. What is your opinion about the future of this fishery?

## THE TAGS PROGRAM

I would like you to tell me what your thoughts are about the TAGS program.  
What is your opinion about the adjustment packages presented by the government, like NCARP and TAGS?

- economically, socially, literacy and training.

**(prompts: help, option to alleviate the crisis for whom, questions of eligibility, charity/handouts, pacifier for fishers and plant workers, cover-up for the plans of the government, relocation, downsizing of the fishery)**

What aspect of the packages did you benefit from? ABE, Make-work Project, Training, Early Retirement package, mobility, training as a professional fishery worker.

Why did you choose those options?

What in your opinion are the problems with this program in general? How do you think it can be different?

The government set out certain criteria for providing compensation to displaced fishery workers, can you tell how have you been affected by it? Has it affected your household's/family's ability to make ends meet? How has it affected the community?

How do you see the government's intervention in the fishery? (prompt: levels of control, and management powers).

Do you think that the fishery could be regulated/managed differently? Explain

***Probe for initiatives of co-management and so on.***

Have you expressed/communicated these ideas to anybody else, e.g. co-workers, friends, community fellows.

In the last month the government announced that the TAGS program will end in 1998, as opposed to 1999, what are your thoughts about that?

What do you think of the new employment insurance program? Do you know how it is different from the now disappeared unemployment insurance?

## **SOCIAL AND SUPPORT NETWORK**

The following questions are about your friends, family, and your relation to them.

### **Contact with brothers and sisters:**

where brothers and sisters live? How far is it from here  
(distance in miles or kilometres)?

How many times have you visited, written, phoned them in the last week/month?

### **Contact with parents:**

where do your parents live? How far is it from here (distance in miles or kilometres)?

How many times have you visited, written, phoned them in the last week/month?

### **Contact with grandparents:**

Where do grandparents live? How far is it from here  
(distance in mile or kilometres)?

How many times have you visited, written, phoned them in the last week/month?

### **Contact with friends:**

Do you have close friends in the community? (Gender of closest friends)

How many times have you visited, written, phoned them in the last week/month?

Where did the relationship started?

Have any of your relationship changed since the 1992?

**IF NO CONTACTS HAVE BEEN MADE, ASK ABOUT THE REASONS, (prompt: distance, health, poor relationship, time, transportation problems).**

### **HOUSEHOLD DIVISION OF LABOUR**

Now let's talk about how the house work is divided in your home?

Tell me who is responsible for the following tasks?

- a) house cleaning
- b) laundry
- c) meal preparation
- d) meal clean up
- e) shopping
- f) small repairs
- g) gardening
- h) decorating the house
- i) general house maintenance
- j) finances - paying bills, etc.
- k) outside maintenance

Who makes the choices for the decoration of your house?

Have you ever hired anyone to help you with any of the above tasks? What were the circumstances for it?

### **Child care assistance/help**

Do you receive help with child care?

How frequently? Where does this help come from? /

a) within the home (older children, grandparents living at home, other parent, etc.)

b) or from outside (relatives, sitters, grandparents living in a separate home, workplace day-care centre, community day-care centre).

Do you have to pay for this help?

Has this division of the chores always been the same? When did it change, and Why?

What do you think about the way housework is divided between your husband/wife and you? *Probe for perceptions of fairness, acceptance, desire to change.*

How is it compared to the way that your parents did it?

### **GENDER QUESTIONS**

Now I would like you to tell me if you think that there are boundaries between the fields of activity of men and women? How clear are these boundaries?

**Prompt: domestic activities, paid activities, activities in the communities.**

What is your opinion of women who men's jobs? e.g. fishing, logging, do repair jobs, hunting, drive trucks.

Can you tell me now, how did you arrive to the answers you gave me? **Probe for points of reference (physical characteristics, responsibilities, behaviour), and how these were attained (parents, friends, community)**

Can you give me a description of the ideal woman?

Give me now a description of the ideal man?

Who has the voice of authority in your house? What does it depend on? **Prompt: financial independence, holding a job, etc.**

How are the financial decisions made in your home? **Prompt: making a purchase, paying the bills, getting a mortgage. Probe for joint decision making, one makes the decision and the other accepts.** Were decisions always made the same way? If not, when did it change and why? Has the situation been altered by the closure/moratorium? How?

Since I have been here I have seen many couples getting married. At what age do people usually marry around here?

What do you think of marriage?

Are there common-law couples in the community?

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

How would you describe your involvement with the community and its social activities?

Are you a member of any specific group, club, or committee?

**Prompt the volunteer fire-fighters, the seniors' club, the recreation committee, etc.**

Are there traditions in this community? Can you tell me about them, and where they come from?

Do you think that the present and future generations will continue these traditions? Can you tell me how?

## Future

We will now take a look at the future?

Can you tell me, what are your long term plans?

Do you plan to stay in this community?

How do you see the future for jobs in this community?

What would you say the economic situation of this community is?

prompt: poor, economically self-sufficient.

Do you feel that you have enough control over your life today --- how is it different from the past?

If you could choose today, what kind of job would you like to do? How far would you go to get a job? Would you move out of the to find a job?

Do you anyone who has moved out of the community since 1992? Who do you think are more likely to move? Where do they go? Who stays?

Do you have any more comments to add?

Thank you very much indeed for your help, I would like to know that your participation in this project is very important. If you would like to have a copy of the interview tape, just let me know.

## **VARIANT 2: For Plant workers**

Introduction: This research project is sponsored by the Institute of Social and Economic Research and the Sociology Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland. The primary objective of this research will be to analyze the extent and nature of the impact of the cod moratorium on the lives of people in the Community of Hant's Harbour. The results of this research will be part of my Master's thesis, which will contribute to a better understanding of processes and strategies used by individuals (men and women) to cope with the changes brought about by the fishery crisis.

### **FISH PLANT EXPERIENCE**

Let us begin by talking about your experience as a plant worker.

Age when you did plant work for the first time?

Where? Who owned the plant?

Why did you choose to work at the plant?

Have you received any formal training in plant work? What, and where?

Has anybody else in your family worked at the plant? Where, when? How long have done plant work for?

Have you always worked in this plant? If not, can you tell me the names of the places, and the length of time you worked at each place?

What jobs did you do when you began at the plant? Can you also tell how long you did each job? What do you do now? What shift?

Which shift do you prefer? Why?

What species did/do you work with?

How was the work paced when you entered plant work? How is it paced now? Did you feel that you had any control over your work? Do you feel you have any control now?

How many women worked in the plant when you began? How many men? Were these numbers the same before July 1992? If not, how are they different? **Prompt: more women then/now, more men then/now?**

Can you tell me about the jobs that men and women did in the plant when you started? What types of work do women do in the plant today? What types of work do men do in the plant today? What shifts do women work on?

When work is scarce who are the first ones to be laid off? What type of jobs these people do? Why do you think that the plant do without these people? Does it have to do with their age, perhaps gender? **Prompt: younger, older, men, women, what type of jobs are less necessary.**

Have you or any of your co-workers experienced any disease or ailment related to the work you do at the plant? If yes, can you tell me what? **Prompt: allergies, colds, breathing problems, asthma, etc.**

Can you tell me what species of seafood you (or your co-worker were working with? **Prompt: ground fish, shell fish (crab, lobster), other types of seafood.** How spread is it? How many cases have you heard of? Has anyone complained about it? How does one proceed to complain? How would you go about it? Does the union get involved? How? What kinds of responses do you receive from?

Can you please describe to me the relation between workers at the plant? How is the relation between workers and management? Have these relations changed over time? If yes, how and why? **Probe for perceptions of change in the years leading up to the moratorium, and after?**

What other activities did/do you do for a living? What other jobs did/do you have? Can you tell me when did/do you perform them? Do you hunt? What do you hunt for? Who do you hunt with? Why do you hunt: food, pleasure?

Can you tell me what it means to you to be a plant worker? Of all the jobs you have had, which one do you feel identified with?

## **EXPERIENCE IN THE FISHERY**

Let's now turn to your experience in the fishery.  
Can you please tell me:

Age when you started fishing? With whom?

Who taught you how to fish?

Have you received any formal training in fishing? if yes, what type, and where?

Why did you decide to fish?

How long have you fished?

Last season fished? Why did you stopped fishing?

Have you always fished in this community/region? If not, can you tell me the names of the places where you worked before and the length of time for each place?

Have you been the skipper in a boat? If yes, for how many years?

Have you been a crew member? For how many years?

Did your mother/father fish? If yes, how long has your family been in the fishery? If not, what did they do?

### **Fishing licences**

What type of fishing licenses have you owned in your career?

Can you tell me when you acquired each one of them?

Were they part-time or full-time?

Special ( supplementary license)

Have you sold any of your licenses?, Which one(s)?, to whom government, other fisher?

Have you ever fished for species that did not require a license? Which ones?

Do you know what is involved in the license allocation process?

(prompt: community/public meetings, draws, etc.)

### **Vessel, Gear and Fishing Property characteristics**

What types of fishing vessels have you ever owned?

For each:

a) rigged for : seining? otter trawl? etc.

b) length

c) capacity

d) material : wood, steel. fibre-glass

e) value

f) equipment? loran C, GPS, echo sounder, VHF, radar.

What type of gear have you ever owned?

a) cod traps? number, size.

b) gillnets? number of strings(nets).

c) line trawls? number per line.

d) crab pots? number, type.

e) handline? number.

f) jiggers?

g) capelin trap? number, size

- h) salmon trap? number, size.
- i) squid trap? number, size.
- j) purse seines? number, size.
- k) other-- specify.

### **VARIANT 3: For Non-Fishers**

Introduction: This research project is sponsored by the Institute of Social and Economic Research and the Sociology Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland. The primary objective of this research will be to analyze the extent and nature of the impact of the cod moratorium on the lives of people in the Community of Hant's Harbour. The results of this research will be part of my Master's thesis, which will contribute to a better understanding of processes and strategies used by individuals (men and women) to cope with the changes brought about by the fishery crisis.

### **WORKING EXPERIENCE**

Let's begin by talking about your working experience.

Can you please tell me:

What is your occupation?

How long have you been doing this work?

Age when you started doing paid work? What type of work? For how long? Where?

Have you received any formal training for the job/s you did/do? If yes, what type, and where?

Why did you decide to take this job? Have you worked with your family? Doing what?

What did your mother and father do for a living?

Have you always worked in this community/region? If not, where else, type of work done, and for how long at each place?

Do you hunt? What do you hunt? Who do you hunt with? Why do you hunt: for food, pleasure.

### **EXPERIENCE IN THE FISHERY**

Have you ever fished?

*If yes continue here. If not, go to experience in plant work?*

When was the first time? With whom did you fish?

Who taught you how to fish? Have you receive any formal training in fishing? What type, and where?

What was you position in the boat? Skipper, crew member?

Why did you decide to fish? Why did you stop? When did you stop? Last season fished?

Did you fish in this community/region?

What does it mean for you to be a fisher?

### **Fishing licences**

What type of fishing licenses have you owned in your career?

Can you tell me when you acquired each one of them?

Were they part-time or full-time?

Special ( supplementary license)

Have you sold any of your licenses?, Which one(s)?, to whom  
government, other fisher?

Have you ever fished for species that did not require a license? Which ones?

Do you know what is involved in the license allocation process?

(prompt: community/public meetings, draws, etc.)

### **Vessel, Gear and Fishing Property characteristics**

What types of fishing vessels have you ever owned?

For each:

- a) rigged for : seining? otter trawl? etc.
- b) length
- c) capacity
- d) material : wood, steel, fibre-glass
- e) value
- f) equipment? loran C, GPS, echo sounder, VHF, radar.

What type of gear have you ever owned?

- a) cod traps? number, size.
- b) gillnets? number of strings(nets).
- c) line trawls? number per line.
- d) crab pots? number, type.
- e) handline? number.
- f) jiggers?
- g) capelin trap? number, size
- h) salmon trap? number, size.
- i) squid trap? number, size.
- j) purse seines? number, size.
- k) other-- specify.

### **FISH PLANT EXPERIENCE**

The following questions are about your experience in plant work.

When did you get involved in plant work for the first time?

Where? Why did you choose to work at the plant?

What species did/do you work with?

What jobs did you do at the plant? And for how long each?

Do/did you feel that you have/had any control over your work?

How many women work in the plant? How many men?

Were these numbers the same before July 1992? If not, how are they different? *Prompt: more women then/now, more men then/now?*

Can you tell me about the jobs that men women did in the plant when you started?

What types of work do women do in the plant today?

What types of work do men?

What shifts do women work on?

When work is scarce who are the first ones to be laid off? *Prompt: younger, older, men, women, what type of jobs are less necessary.*

Describe the relation between workers at the plant?

How are the relation between workers and management? Have these relation changed over time? If yes, why?



