

BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH:
WOMEN FISH HARVESTERS IN
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**Between Life and Death:
Women Fish Harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador**

by
Brenda Grzetic

A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACES-WG:	Atlantic Children's Evaluation Sub-committee - Working Group
CBC:	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CONA:	College of the North Atlantic
DFO:	Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
EI:	Employment Insurance
FFAW:	Fish Food and Allied Workers Union
FH:	Fish Harvester
FRCC:	Fisheries Resource Conservation Council
HRDC:	Human Resources Development Canada
I:	Interviewer
NAFO:	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
NCARP:	Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program
ODC:	Oil Development Council of Unions
PFHCB:	Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (the Board)
PLAR:	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
SAR:	Search and Rescue
SOC:	Standard Occupational Classification
TAGS:	The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy
UI:	Unemployment Insurance
WHSCC:	Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

While attending a workshop and an international conference in the spring of 2000, I had the opportunity to listen to women fish harvesters from Atlantic Canada talk about their work experiences and health concerns. They spoke about the effects that the simultaneous restructuring of the fishing industry and social programs such as Employment Insurance were having on their lives and their health. They also talked about the need for more research on, support for, and attention to issues such as professionalization and occupational health, as well as their implications for women's health and well-being (Neis and Grzetic, 2000; *Yemaya*, August, 2000).

This thesis is a response to those concerns. It explores the work and learning experiences and health concerns of women fish harvesters within the context of the recent restructuring of the fishing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. I assess women's participation and professional status in the fishing industry, and identify occupational and general health concerns associated with their work. I also investigate ways in which individual and organizational processes are gendered and determinants of both women's place in the fishery and their overall health and well-being. The social determinants of health provide a broad analytical framework, while more specific analyses and insights into gender dynamics incorporate a feminist analysis.

This thesis combines both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Qualitative analysis focuses on the work environment in the restructured fishery, women's work and learning

experiences on fishing boats, their conditions at work, the institutional support available to them, and the implications of these for their health and safety as workers in the fishing industry. Primary data are taken from sixteen in-depth interviews with women fish harvesters on the south and west coasts of the Island and one key informant interview with a representative of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB). Quantitative analysis focuses on trends in the numbers of women fish harvesters since the 1970s, licensing and professionalization status of fish harvesters, women's participation in training initiatives, and links between these and health risks to women fish harvesters.

This research extends previous work on the dynamics of women's health related to industrial restructuring within the Newfoundland fishery which I began with Dr. Barbara Neis in 1998. Our recent report "From Fishplant to Nickel Smelter: Health Determinants and the Health of Newfoundland's Women Fish and Shellfish Processors in an Environment of Restructuring" dealt primarily with fish processing workers, the fisheries sector hardest hit by fisheries and EI restructuring. One aim of the work associated with this report was to increase public involvement in a gender-analysis of impacts and policies related to industrial and social restructuring in rural Newfoundland and Labrador (Neis and Grzetic, 2000). This thesis extends that work to women fish harvesters. It also provides an opportunity for me to link this fisheries research to previous investigations (Grzetic *et al.*, 1996; Grzetic, 1998) into women's experiences in male-dominated trades and technology work and training in Newfoundland and Labrador.

1.1 Thesis Overview

In this chapter I introduce this research which explores women fish harvesters' health at work, in a context of social and environmental restructuring. The importance of carrying out this research will be discussed, as well as the interdisciplinary nature of the topic being studied. I provide a review of the existing research concerning women's role as fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador and in other countries. Based on the social determinants of health approach, this research considers health determinants such as gender, employment, work environment, working conditions, and learning, and their effects on women's health.

In Chapter Two, I develop the analytical framework used in the research to assess policy impacts on women's work and their health and well-being. This framework incorporates insights from the social determinants of health (Health Canada, 1999), a social ecological perspective (Neis *et al*, 2001; Stokols, 1996), and feminist research (Moore, 1994). While I draw on both qualitative and quantitative data, I mainly use a feminist post-structuralist approach to analyzing women's narratives. The methodology section outlines the approach taken with data collection, and highlights the importance of doing participatory and emancipatory research based on feminist values.

In Chapter Three, I begin my exploration of women fish harvesters' work and learning experiences and impacts on their health by introducing the women interviewed in this study. I describe their work responsibilities, work loads, and relations with their husbands, co-workers and fisheries institutions. I then provide an overview of the major

social, economic, and environmental changes that form the context within which women in inshore fishing families were living and working in 2001. I also explain recent changes in women's participation as fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In Chapter Four, I provide a more detailed analysis of women's health and through their narratives, describe how they understand their health relationally and as connected to the fisheries. I consider the impact of fisheries management policies on the safety practices of fish harvesters and the health of fish resources. I also discuss the effects of restructuring on women's health in terms of violence against women, work overload, and the adequacy of health services in rural Newfoundland communities. Drawing on health questionnaire data, I outline women's responses to a variety of questions about injuries, diagnosed conditions, and personal health practices.

In Chapter Five, I explore a particular aspect of fisheries restructuring, professionalization, and the current approach taken to fisheries training in this province. I draw again on women's narratives to discuss women's informal learning on-the-job and their formal learning in the classroom. I discuss the degree to which they feel trained and competent to work on fishing boats and the work and learning dynamic between women and their husbands aboard fishing boats. I conclude this chapter with women's views on the future of the inshore fishery, the fisheries workforce, and their role in it.

Finally, in the concluding chapter, I summarize the main findings concerning women's health at work and the impact of restructuring on their work, learning, and health. Given women's invisibility in the management of fish resources, I offer some

recommendations for change that might improve their status, help acknowledge the importance of their work, and address their concerns regarding training and occupational health. I also review my approach to studying women's health at work and offer some suggestions for future research.

1.2 Fisheries Restructuring

Since the late 1980s many changes have taken place in the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery. While inshore fish harvesters were dealing with declining fish landings in the mid-1980s, major change began in 1992 when, after years of over-harvesting, over-capacity, use of intensive technologies, mismanagement, and environmental change, the commercial groundfish fishery was shut down. Two moratoria were called: one in 1992 on the northern cod stocks and a second on other groundfish stocks in 1994. At present, a ground fishery exists but with drastically reduced quotas.

A total of 50,000 fishery workers throughout Atlantic Canada were affected by the moratoria and over 32,000 of those were from Newfoundland and Labrador (Williams, 1996, 21; Storey and Smith, 1995, 170). Job loss affected not only fish harvesters and fish processing workers, but also people in various spin-off jobs associated with the fishery. Two adjustment programs, the Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program (NCARP) and The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS), were put in place to reduce the size of the fishery workforce and to provide income support and assistance through training and work projects. These programs aimed to assist displaced fishery workers to

make the transition to other areas of work or, for some, to "enhance the profession of fishers who will remain active in the industry" (Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), 1998, 11). Other elements of the two adjustment programs included license buybacks, early retirement programs and relocation support for fish harvesters and fish processing workers exiting the industry.

The moratoria acted as a catalyst for restructuring the fisheries at the policy level. This restructuring has been driven by a belief that there are "too many fishermen chasing too few fish." The main solution is believed to involve decreasing the number of processing workers, fish harvesters, and plants by means of rationalization processes premised on competition, reduced access to social programs, and privatization. The cornerstone of fisheries rationalization is found in policies designed to enclose the commons through privatization and individualization of fish resources previously understood to be common property or open to the public. This involves increased emphasis on the individual 'entrepreneur' fish harvester and increased market control within the industry (McKay, 1999, 301; Munk-Madsen, 1998, 229; Neis and Williams, 1997, 48). In Newfoundland and Labrador this neo-liberal ideological thrust has resulted in increasing attachment to global markets while reducing local access to fishery resources and the size of the fishery workforce, and decreasing fishery workers' reliance on the federal government's Employment Insurance (EI) program for seasonal workers through restructuring of the EI program (MacDonald, 1999, 63).

1.2.1 Women's Work in the Restructured Fisheries

In the fishery, much of women's work can be characterized by its division on the basis of sex – traditionally, women have worked on shore while men have worked at sea. As Nadel-Klein and Davis argue, one characteristic of women's work in the fishery here and elsewhere is the way it has been undervalued, unpaid and made invisible by a male-focused and capitalist bias related to how 'productive work' is defined (1988, 7). This male-bias in valuing the types of work considered 'productive,' and therefore recognized by governments and other institutions, is an issue that has characterized fisheries policies in Newfoundland and Labrador since their origin.

An important goal in this research is to explore some of the links between restructuring and women's health. Among other things, this involves identifying processes that have historically perpetuated women's invisibility, ways in which restructuring redefines these processes, and the implications of these for women's health and well-being. Historically, the invisibility of women's work has been institutionalized in a number of ways – the most well-known being discriminatory Unemployment Insurance (UI) regulations that in the past credited a woman's fish processing work to her husband and denied UI eligibility to women who fished with their husbands (Williams, 1996, 12; Connelly and MacDonald, 1995, 391). Because wives who fished with their husbands were prevented from applying for UI, their work was not recognized, and they were denied access to the benefits of fishing and fishery resources (Neis, 1993, 199). This discouraged women from fishing. Beginning in the 1980s women fish harvesters fought

successfully for fairer assessments, recognition, and compensation of their work, especially with regard to UI. Further challenges still exist for women fish harvesters with the new EI¹ regulations.

Probably more than any other policy, EI affects the work dynamic within fishing communities and the fishing household. EI regulations regarding fishing define a fish harvester broadly as someone doing a variety of tasks related to the fishing enterprise both on land as ground crew, and on the water (Human Resources Development Canada, 2001, Part 1). EI regulations, however, restrict recognition and compensation for ground crew work in the fishing enterprise unless those workers are also actively involved in catching fish. This regulation has made it difficult to compensate women who are more likely than men to do only ground crew work because EI benefits relate solely to work effort on the water realized through *fish sold*. The result is that women doing this work have often been ineligible for EI.

The ways in which women in the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery are being affected by fisheries restructuring have been researched thus far mainly in relation to the NCARP and TAGS adjustment programs. For some very good reasons, research has tended to focus on women in the fish and shellfish processing sector. Employment loss has been much greater than in fish harvesting (Neis *et al.*, 2001, 40), and processing workers appear to have become more vulnerable to repetitive strain injuries resulting from

¹In July 1996, Human Resources Development Canada changed the name Unemployment Insurance (UI) to Employment Insurance (EI).

changes in technology (Neis and Williams, 1990) and diseases such as snow crab occupational asthma (Neis, 1995). Some patterns of exclusion were documented in looking at women's experiences with the TAGS program. First and foremost was that women's input was excluded from the design of TAGS itself and later, from the design of skills-based training programs. As a result, many women had difficulty getting institutional support for appropriate training that was linked to employment (Neis *et al.*, 2001, 119). Women fish harvesters in particular, had to struggle to even become eligible for TAGS (FFAW/CAW, 1994, 14; Neis *et al.*, 2001; Williams, 1996, 23-25; Robinson, 1996, 172). Further research is needed to document the impact of new fisheries management policies on women and specifically, the effects of such policies on the health of women fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador.

In Norway, the impact of fisheries restructuring on women has been well documented over the past decade. There, researchers have found that restructuring has tended to further marginalize and make invisible women's traditional activities in the fisheries. The result is that women's traditional work has not translated into rights of access for women in modern fisheries management policies which "build a strong bond between science and the state and rest on a particular image of nature and society" (Munk-Madsen, 1998, 230). Women's rights are based on a particular assessment of their needs. The particular image of nature and society that Munk-Madsen talks about leaves little room to address women's need to work for pay, to have their training needs met, and to have a voice in the development of fisheries management policies. New management

structures provide ways to formalize male dominance and act to formally restrict women while disregarding much of the work they do (Munk-Madsen, 1998, 230). This exclusion is evident in the low number of women fish harvesters in Norway. In 1994 there were 561 women fish harvesters, constituting 2.4% of the fisheries workforce (Munk-Madsen, 1998, 233). By 2000, the number of both women and men had decreased and there were 526 women working as fish harvesters, representing 2.6% of the fishing workforce (Personal correspondence, Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries, 2001).

Research on women in the Icelandic fisheries and in Newfoundland and Labrador focuses on women's role in the fish processing workforce where, as Unnur Skaptadóttir explains, they are often treated as a 'reserve pool of labour' (1996, 91). Women are brought into and sent out of the workforce as conditions change and as the demand for labour grows or shrinks. During periods of restructuring, when employment opportunities typically shrink, women's health may be compromised if they are unable to maintain their employment and income.

For those remaining in rural communities, the loss of employment, lack of alternative employment, and financial uncertainty have been major stressors. The increased stress on fishing families from loss of employment and income during the late 1980s and the moratorium period are well documented (Rowe Consulting, 1991, 31; Williams, 1996, 21). In their recent research entitled "From Fishplant to Nickel Smelter," Neis, Grzetic and Pidgeon (2001) found that the main group of workers hit particularly hard by the moratoria were fish processing workers, especially those in inshore seasonal

plants where the majority of workers were women. Women's health was affected by the loss of employment and incomes and, for those who remained working in fishplants, by changes in the primary occupational health risks in the industry. They concluded that environmental restructuring, along with government and industry efforts to downsize the fishing industry, shifts from groundfish to crab and shrimp processing, and changes to EI regulations, have resulted in fewer jobs, less certain work, and reduced incomes for fish processing workers. The effects of restructuring were associated with increased levels of depression for some women displaced from fish processing plants, particularly where training programs through TAGS failed to offset the risks to these women's health associated with unemployment (Neis *et al.*, 2001).

Other research has also determined that NCARP and TAGS were not entirely effective in helping laid-off fish processing workers find alternative employment. In their study on the effectiveness of TAGS and NCARP in helping people move out of the fishery, Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) found that by 1996 fish processing workers were a much lower percentage of 'adjusted'² workers than fish harvesters (1998, iv).

²In their evaluation of the TAGS program, income - both type and amount - are key to HRDC's definition of adjustment and whether HRDC got credit for assisting in a person's adjustment. If income was from fisheries work, HRDC did not get credit for assisting in that person adjustment. The calculation also compared a recipient's after-TAGS dependency on EI to his/her dependency on UI prior to TAGS (measured over the 1988-1991 period). For a more in-depth explanation of their definition of adjustment see Appendix 1 of the Evaluation of the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS).

Women in fishing families have historically taken an active role in ensuring the success of fishing enterprises by doing important ground crew work such as line baiting, washing boats, bookkeeping, purchasing food and spare parts, banking, interacting with fisheries officials and buyers, as well as other aspects of managing fishing operations on shore (Neis and Williams, 1997, 50, Jentoft, 1993). As Marilyn Porter wrote, women in fishing families are often described as the 'skippers of the shore crew' (Porter, 1985). While their numbers have been small, women in Newfoundland and Labrador have also been crew members on inshore and offshore boats where they have worked mainly as cooks and helpers (Williams, 1996, 11).

For women throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, the fishery crisis is not just about over-fishing, tighter regulations and monitoring, and the need for new management structures. The financial and emotional stress on fishing families and the continued survival of rural communities are major concerns often articulated by them. These concerns are central to their views on industry restructuring and restructuring of social programs such as EI that are essential to seasonal workers (FFAW, 1994, 7; Cahill and Martland, 1993, 11; Jentoft, 1993, 72). The lack of employment resulting from the moratoria has forced many people to look outside the fishery and rural Newfoundland for work and particularly, to encourage their children to do so. As rural populations decrease due to outmigration, local social support networks which have in the past mitigated the effects of unemployment, may also decrease (Neis, 1998, 10).

Over the past decade, while fisheries have been restructured in Canada, the number of women working on fishing boats has increased on both coasts. While no studies have been done specifically on the work experiences and health concerns of women fishing in the Pacific Northwest, their numbers have been increasing as women take advantage of opportunities in commercial fishing (Nadel-Klein and Davis, 1988, 9; Jensen, 1995, vii). For a variety of reasons, the number of women fishing in Newfoundland and Labrador has also increased during the past decade. The depletion of fish stocks, lowered market value of fish and increased privatization have resulted in decreased access to resources and income for many inshore fishermen (Neis, 1998, 2). It has been suggested that lower real incomes coming into households, changes to EI regulations, and the lack of onshore jobs for women in fish processing and other areas after the moratoria, may be acting as the catalyst for women to move into work as fish harvesters (Neis and Williams, 1997, 48; Neis and Grzetic, 2000). In Prince Edward Island, Maureen Larkin (1990) found a similar pattern where single lobster enterprises were increasingly unable to support multiple families and had to develop new strategies to stabilize their household income. The main strategy involved women going fishing with their husbands. In traditional fishing families, men's work and source of income take precedence and as Connelly and MacDonald explain, "it is women who mainly reallocate and readjust their labour as conditions change, in order to maintain the family household" (1995, 394).

It is not possible to study fisheries restructuring in Newfoundland in the 1990s without consideration of the effects of changes to the EI program in 1996. These changes

may be having an adverse effect on women because they specifically target part-time workers, making it more difficult for them to qualify for EI. Recently, Kelly Lesiuk, a part-time nurse from Winnipeg brought a successful court challenge against the federal government, claiming that the new EI regulations violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms because they discriminated against women who are more likely to work part-time (Canadian Labour Congress, 2001).

Fishing families may also be adversely affected by new EI regulations which target not only part-time workers but also seasonal workers who, according to the federal government, have become *too dependent on the system* (Pulkingham, 1998, 8). Eligibility for EI has been made more difficult and requires longer periods of employment for shorter benefit periods, and there are penalties for reuse. This clawing back of benefits, while recently discontinued, has made it much more difficult financially for many inshore fishing families to continue fishing as a source of income and a way of life in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

1.2.2 The Health of Women Fish Harvesters

Within fisheries, restructuring entails the redesign of rules, laws, and discourses that determine women fish harvesters' rights, needs, and access to material, structural, and emotional resources in the workplace, the household and in their communities. When studying its effects, we must consider the fit between redesigned rules and women's understanding of their rights and needs, changes in their workload and in the quality of

their work experiences. All three aspects of restructuring - access, fit, and quality - impact on women's autonomy and equality and have implications for their health.

Central to this research is a focus on the experiences of women fish harvesters, the conditions under which they work in the restructured fishery, and the effects that fisheries restructuring has on their identity, autonomy, health. Gender analysis is therefore key to this discussion. Areas of thematic focus include the effects of restructuring on women's work responsibilities, work relations and work environment in the fishery; their occupational health and safety as fishery workers, professionalization and training, and some concluding thoughts on the fishery of the future.

1.3 Significance and Social Relevance of the Research

This research is significant for a variety of reasons. First, it responds to a request for research and support from women fish harvesters who are trying to overcome issues of invisibility and marginalization in the fishing industry. Second, given women's highly segregated position in the workforce, it is always important to investigate changes in their labour force participation. Some women may always have been fishing in the inshore small boat fisheries. However, the number of women working as fish harvesters has been increasing since the early 1980s, although the extent of the increase in Newfoundland and Labrador is unclear and needs to be investigated (Neis and Williams, 1997, 48; Neis and Grzetic, 2000).

Third, the division of labour between men and women is a malleable and dynamic social construct in which the household, along with other institutions, plays an important role. An increase in the number of women on fishing boats indicates a change in the sexual division of labour, probably linked to changes in the industry, social programs, fishing communities and household income. It is important to understand the reasons why the number of women fish harvesters is increasing, the nature of the division of labour on board boats, and the conditions under which women are working.

Fourth, these women are moving into a male-dominated work environment where very little research has been done to identify their health risks and concerns. Women's occupational health in general has been understudied and undermined by patriarchal institutions regardless of whether women are working in male or female-dominated workplaces (Messing, 1998). Research on women in male-dominated occupations has shown that they are vulnerable to unemployment and marginalization, as well as exposure to work environments that are not designed a) for women's bodies, b) for a mixed-sex workforce, or c) for women's home and community-related responsibilities (Grzetic *et al.*, 1996, 49; Messing, 1997).

A final reason why this research is needed is that while significant work has been done to make issues related to women's health visible (Jack, 1991; Neis *et al.*, 2001; Messing, 1998; Ostrove and Adler, 1998), more research is needed to study the links between inequality and industrial restructuring, the construction of gender, and the health of women in specific contexts. It is important that these studies integrate core debates in

feminist theory. Literature on the social determinants of health often claims to take a gender-neutral approach. This can result in a male bias and a related disregard for the reality of women's lives and the constraints on their opportunities. One of my aims then is to provide a feminist analysis that takes into consideration the fact that women are often seriously disadvantaged compared to men. Evidence for this in the case of Atlantic Canadian fisheries indicates that this disadvantage may play out in women's lives in a variety of ways that could negatively affect their health and well-being. Since federal and provincial health and fisheries policies are currently influenced by frameworks that are generally uninformed by feminist theory, I feel that such research is long overdue.

This thesis integrates ideas and knowledge from disciplines such as health sciences, sociology/anthropology, philosophy, and political science to help investigate social, political, economic and environmental factors that affect women's health. I will explore some of the ways the health of women fish harvesters is affected and integrate feminist ideas to help broaden our understanding of women's health at work. The sociological perspective involves the study of local social and industrial restructuring and the ways in which the related processes are gendered and linked to health. Transitions in women's work – both paid and unpaid – and education are of particular interest, as well as the impacts of restructuring on support for women fish harvesters at the institutional and community level and the resulting impacts on women's health.

The study of individual and collective identities leads inevitably to debates about rights and needs. As women struggle to negotiate, make sense of, and legitimate their

own changing identities and changing needs, which often conflict with and contradict dominant views, the spaces for political action expand (Jenson, 1993, 147). In this research, such struggles and negotiations inevitably lead to questions about differential access to institutional resources necessary for women to address their needs as fish harvesters and as women workers. Henrietta Moore reminds us that access to such resources is affected by one's membership in certain demographic groups and therefore, by socially constructed differences between people: "Such socially established differences generally draw on normative understandings and practices which are linked to accepted power differences and ideologies" (1994, 91). Linked to questions of power within fishing households and between households and organizations related to the fishing industry, are issues associated with 'naturalized' notions of women's place and skills. When ideas about women's skills are naturalized, a validity and justification is given to women's place in the fishery. This often determines the degree of institutional support they can expect, but it also affects women's sense of the value of their own ideas concerning their place in the fishery, their autonomy and their participation in building a sustainable fishery and sustainable communities. The nature and impact of gendered policies and practices and their historical legacy directly influence women's presence as fish harvesters and their health and safety in a male-dominated work environment.

1.4 Conclusions

In this chapter I have introduced the research topic, given an overview of the thesis, and introduced the relevant themes associated with the recent fisheries crisis in Newfoundland and Labrador and the impact of fisheries restructuring on women's work and health. The discussion has included the main areas of study in this research, including the socio-economic conditions that affect women's participation in the industry, work responsibilities, work relations and the work environment; professionalization of the restructured fishery, the gendered and historical construction of women's position in the fishery, and health and safety issues.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY AND METHODS

I take as my starting point in this research a feminist position that the current gendered social order is problematic in that its dualistic and hierarchical beliefs disadvantage many women and compromise their health and well-being. I understand this social construction of disadvantage to be institutionalized. It is unfair, discriminatory and disabling and I believe it is important to expose the gendered nature of our social institutions so that all women, regardless of class, race, sexuality, age or ability, can recognize the many ways in which the social order is maintained and perpetuated so they might find ways to act in order to change it. This is a common goal among the many feminisms that exist – to denaturalize discourses about women and to redistribute power and material resources to benefit women.

Feminist research and writing is one way I try to create change in this world. I undertook this research as a feminist who believes that the construction of inequality undermines women's autonomy and has particular consequences for their health and well-being. I also believe that all social policy, regardless of whether it concerns education, employment, economic development or social services, should have as its broad aims to alleviate inequality and oppression, thereby improving health.

2.1 The Social Determinants of Health

The 1999 *Second Report on the Health of Canadians* by Health Canada describes the inter-relatedness of social and economic conditions and ways that health is affected by adequate learning opportunities, meaningful work and working conditions, gender, income, and the physical environment. Education/training is an important determinant of health because of its influence on employment opportunities, working conditions and income (51). Other research indicates that education/training affects people's health because it tends to have a positive effect on people's confidence, their levels of participation in society and the quality of their social supports (Ross & Van Willigan, 1997, 275). Employment has a significant effect on people's physical, emotional and social health not only because it provides an income but also a sense of identity and purpose, social contact and opportunities for personal growth (Health Canada, 1999, 54). Working conditions in both paid and unpaid work can have important impacts on physical and emotional health. Workers who have more control in their workplace are often healthier than those who have little control. The degree of support in the workplace and stress-related demands associated with the work environment are also known to affect health (Health Canada, 1994, 18). All of these health determinants have consequences for the life of women fish harvesters.

Physical and emotional safety are other important determinants of women's health and well-being. Given women's often subordinate position in the workplace and the home, they sometimes have to deal with emotional and physical violence. Income and

income uncertainty are critically important determinants of health. People with higher incomes tend to live longer, healthier lives than people with low incomes. The physical environment affects the health and well-being of women in fishing families, first and foremost because their very livelihood depends upon the health and sustainability of fish resources. The degradation of fish resources off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and elsewhere in the world, has been well-documented.

While all the determinants of health are inter-related, gender impacts on each of them. In this thesis, all the health determinants under study are viewed through a gender lens. Health Canada provides the following definition of gender and analysis of its links to health:

Gender is a social construct rooted more in human culture than biological difference between the sexes. Gender refers to the array of socially determined roles, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis.

The embodiment of gendered norms in social institutions and practices has subordinated women, inhibited their achievement of political, cultural, social, and economic equality, and as a consequence, impeded their attainment of optimal health status.

In Canada, women will, on average, live longer than men, suffer more chronic and disabling disease, be predeceased by a male partner, be better educated, earn significantly less, have less access to supplementary health insurance, be more likely to head up a lone parent family, have differential rates and types of exposure to health risks and threats (e.g. accidents, STDs, suicide, smoking, substance abuse, prescription drugs, physical activity, etc.) for gender-related reasons. Other factors (including some of the other determinants) will further shape the presence, incidence, and nature of these health-related factors, but, in the first instance, the most influencing factor is gender (1996, 17).

2.1.1 The Health Effects of Restructuring

Since the mid 1980s, Canadian society has undergone a period of extensive industrial and political restructuring. Some of the major restructuring-related processes include resource degradation, trade liberalization, work reorganization (deskilling and reskilling), downsizing and mass layoffs, outsourcing, capital flight, privatization, professionalization, deregulation, urbanization, and changes to public services and social programs (Armstrong, 1996, 29; MacDonald, 1999, 59). These processes sometimes increase the level of stressors and change the types of stressors in people's lives, and may affect health in other ways by changing: 1) the location, types, and availability of work; 2) incomes; 3) the regulatory environment for unionization; 4) the regulatory environment for the prevention and detection of work-related health risks; 5) environmental regulations; and 6) workers' access to public services related to unemployment, health care, training, as well as to compensation for loss of work, accident, injury or occupational disease (Lavis, 1998, 12; Neis, 1998, 2).

Research on the potential negative health effects of industrial restructuring tends to focus on restructuring within sectors, particularly the urban service sector and manufacturing employment (Leach and Winson, 1995, 342). This research has shown that an environment of downsizing and capital flight increases employment uncertainty, unemployment, and forced retirement, all of which are important sources of psychosocial stress for displaced workers and their families (Ferrie, 1997, 381; Koslowski *et al.*, 1993, 277-279). Attempts to create a 'flexible' workforce have increased employment instability

and financial insecurity, affect more people than those who actually lose their jobs (Ferrie, 1997, 393), and affect women differently than men (Leach and Winson, 1995, 357; Neis, 1998, 5). In her analysis of data from the Whitehall II study done in Britain, Jane Ferrie found that psychological disorder was significantly increased among insecurely employed women and men but women had the poorest self-reported health status (1997, 389). She concluded that workplace restructuring resulted in adverse affects on health both before and after the restructuring took place.

Downsizing also creates psychological stress for *surviving* workers (Ferrie, 1997, 393) partly because they feel guilty and also by creating an environment of work overload, job redesign, pressures to retrain, and new retraining requirements. Uncertainty in employment creates a fearful atmosphere among employees, increasing their reluctance to identify safety problems, and encouraging them to take 'unnecessary' risks in order to appear productive and to take 'necessary' risks in order to guarantee an income (Murray and Dolomount, 1994; Witherill and Kolak, 1996).

2.1.2 Restructuring, Gender, and Health

Restructuring is not gender neutral. As argued by Connelly and MacDonald, "[g]ender relations shape the government, corporate, and household strategies and the labour market-outcomes associated with restructuring" (1996, 82). They also affect the health outcomes of restructuring. Social norms and structures place constraints on both abilities and desires by, for example, altering women's ability to access education/training,

work and income. In her research on restructuring in Canada during the 1990s, Pat Armstrong found that restructuring has resulted in an increased workload for many women and a concurrent degrading or harmonizing down of men's work. Restructuring has eliminated some men's jobs and made men's work more like work women have traditionally done and for the lower wages that women have traditionally been paid (1995, 369). In many developed countries restructuring has all but eliminated trends in economic policies that ensured a 'family' wage for male workers, while at the same time, forcing more women into the workforce.

There are health implications for both women and men resulting from the feminization of the labour force and harmonizing down. While many aspects of men's work have deteriorated, women too have been exposed to economic pressures to increase their workload for lower wages or no pay at all and often under deteriorating conditions. Nowhere is this more evident than in the downloading of caring work for the sick and disabled onto communities and households and hence, onto women.

Economic pressures such as those found during periods of restructuring, negatively affect men's work and put additional pressure on women to do paid work. More and more often, that work is part-time, contingent and still lower paid than much of men's work (Armstrong, 1995, 371; Leach and Winson, 1995, 347). During restructuring women's workload is known to increase especially in cases where they take on additional paid work without changes in the sexual division of labour within the household (Connelly and MacDonald, 1996, 82-83).

Both access to employment opportunities and working conditions (including overall daily workload) are important factors in women's health and well-being (Health Canada, 1999, 64). Women's health is also affected by the broader context of environmental degradation, local economics, resource development, resource management initiatives, technological innovations, migration, labour standards and Workers' Compensation legislation, and policy changes related to health, education, social services and Employment Insurance. Women's work may include paid work, unpaid domestic work, unpaid work in support of family-run businesses, caring work and community/kinship work. Resource degradation, coupled with industrial restructuring, out-migration and the erosion of public services have been shown to extend the workload of women (Messias *et al.*, 1997). New work responsibilities, in addition to the already existing workload of women, may compromise their health, especially in the absence of traditional support systems, lack of financial compensation and decreasing social services.

Neis and Williams (1997, 50) argue that industrial and work restructuring linked to environmental degradation may impact on women's health by increasing levels of stress, poorer nutrition, increased poverty, unemployment, and economic dependence, and by placing constraints on access to retraining, safe work, daycare, and appropriate health and other social services (Neis and Williams, 1997, 50). Other research has stressed the positive effect of employment on women's health and that, on average, employed women live longer than unemployed women or housewives (Ostrove and Adler, 1998, 453). It is important to understand that women's occupational health is very under-studied, across all

occupations. Occupational risks to women's health can change when traditional work environments are replaced with new ones. This is especially true when women move into male-dominated work environments where much more research into women's occupational health is needed (Grzetic *et al.*, 1996, 33; Messing, 1991, 83).

2.1.3 The Work and Health of Women Fish Harvesters

Women's work in fishing families encompasses both fishing work and a range of care-taking duties in the home and the community. But, as Marilyn Porter explains, the sexual division of labour in fishing households does not always imply male dominance (1985). In fact, the fishing family's basic struggle for survival combined with the onerous workload involved, creates a kind of solidarity between husband and wife, often despite oppressive conditions, including violence (Cadigan, 1991). It is therefore more likely that the family and work dynamics within fishing households are based on a mutual dependence and cooperation between husband and wife that is mediated by economic necessity. In some cases, more egalitarian relationships will result, despite the historical lack of recognition and financial compensation for women's work by social institutions.

The centrality of women's work in the fishery restricts the amount of time they have available for other activities that generate income for the household and this often results in women becoming economically dependent on men (Cadigan, 1991). And fishery-related work is only part of women's daily workload. Their work involves a fusing of production and reproduction work as they also take care of children and older family

members, cook and clean house, tend a family garden, and plan and organize community activities (Williams, 1996, 1-2). Men become economically dependent on this fishing work that women do (Neis, 1999, 35). Not only is there a sharing of duties, but, probably equally important is the fact that women's work helps strengthen the status of the male fisherman in the community. Therefore we must view women's role as including their physical and social reproductive work of giving birth to potential new fish harvesters and giving these children an outlook on life which is grounded in fishing as a way of life (Nadel-Klein and Davis, 1988).

Women's work lives are far from orderly: they often juggle work inside and outside the home. Sometimes they work part-time and move into and out of the workforce several times during their working lives. Yet, most women like to and usually need to work, and many women in fishing families say they enjoy their work and identify strongly with the fishery (Neis, 1999, 45; Porter, 1993).

Women's workload, especially during the fishing season, is an important consideration when studying women's health in fishing families. In recent years, more and more women in fishing families are trying to offset the uncertainty associated with fishing with paid work of their own outside the home. Research has shown that work transitions can have varying effects on women's health. In their research on the health effects of work transitions among women in their midlife, Pavalko and Smith found that the context of the transition and the dynamics of women's work lives were the main determinants of whether women's health was positively or negatively affected. Women whose workforce

transitions were involuntary had the greatest increases in physical limitations (Pavalko and Smith 1999, 1152).

A study done in Norway found that only 9% of women in fishing families fished with their husbands even though 40% of them said they would like to fish and 44% of the men said they would prefer that their wives did so (Jentoft, 1993, 78). However, fishing is a family tradition where knowledge of work on the water is transferred from father to son. As Marian Binkley explains, most learning early on in a boy's life occurs on an individual and informal basis. The majority of boys in fishing families who learn to fish go through a period of initiation where the fathers socialize their boys into a particular way of being a fish harvester in order to cope with the environment (1995, 155). What happens when the traditional transfer of knowledge from father to son shifts from husband to wife? How do gender dynamics affect women's work as fish harvesters? How are industrial and environmental restructuring affecting their work and learning?

In this thesis I will document women's accounts of why they became fish harvesters, the degree to which they feel trained and competent to go to work on fishing boats, and their interactions at work with their husbands, co-workers, industry/union representatives, government and other people in their communities. I will also document ways their health is affected by their working conditions, the work environment, and public policy.

Work is important to women's health but the value associated with work women do and the conditions under which they are working are also important areas to consider.

Insight into women's work on fishing boats off Newfoundland and Labrador was provided by Mildred Skinner, a Fish, Food and Allied Workers (FFAW) representative and fish harvester, at a recent workshop on 'Industrial Restructuring and Women's Health' (Neis and Grzetic, 2000) and at an international conference entitled "Gender, Globalization and the Fisheries" held at MUN from May 6-12, 2000. Her presentations help us understand some of the dynamics and complexity of women's work and health in fish harvesting. The following quote is from one of her presentations where she is describing a conversation with another woman fish harvester. The woman was telling her about the stress she felt after she went to work as a fish harvester:

Since I started fishing, I have aged because of the stress, the stress of feeling guilty. I feel guilty when I am out fishing because of the time I spend away from my family. If I take the day off, I feel guilty because my husband has to fish alone. If I am not aboard of the boat that day ... I feel guilty when people think I'm not fishing so I don't deserve my EI next winter. And the chances are that someone ... may call HRD and report that I wasn't in the fishing boat that day (cited in Neis and Grzetic, 2000).

Other issues raised during her presentations include:

- difficulties qualifying for Employment Insurance under the new, more rigid criteria because they cannot get enough hours fishing during the season;
- the stress resulting from additional workload, for example with eldercare, for women who remain in rural communities;
- difficulties finding dependable childcare workers willing to care for their children during the long hours they are at sea;
- government investigations challenging child care workers' Employment Insurance claims adding to women's difficulties in finding and keeping reliable child care workers;
- stigmatization by those outside of the fishery who think women don't really fish;
- stigmatization by male fishers who don't accept women as legitimate and equal co-workers in the boats;
- lack of mechanical knowledge related to operating boats;

- risks to women's physiological health such as back and joint problems and kidney infections;
- risks created by the requirement to fish farther from shore in relatively small boats; and,
- stress related to anxiety about what would happen to families if both parents are hurt or die on the sea since husbands and wives often fish together.

This thesis will explore in greater depth these issues, the gender dynamics of women's work and learning as inshore fish harvesters, and issues related to their occupational health.

Research on women working on fishing boats and in the fishing industry in Oceania¹ suggests that women's work is both downplayed and devalued. Leonie Stella, who studied women's experiences on trawlers off the coast of Western Australia, argues that women's participation in the industry requires only "appropriate maritime training, a love of the sea, an enjoyment of fishing and manual labour, and the ability to cope with long periods of being away from friends and family on the land" (1996, 192). However, she goes on to say that for any substantial change to take place in the industry, including increased participation by women, the masculine culture that promotes an ideal of risk-taking, an aggressive attitude towards the natural environment, a highly competitive hierarchy, a disregard for the rights of others to work in a safe environment, and a disrespect for women, must be challenged outright and changed (193).

¹Oceania includes the islands of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the main island groups of Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia.

In other parts of Oceania, Margaret Chapman found that women's work in the inshore fishery was constantly devalued. For example, she found that men were reluctant to share their knowledge of fishing with women because local myths and taboos needed to be upheld in order to ensure good catches. The restrictions include refraining from sexual intercourse before fishing trips, the banning of women from building boats and handling nets, and preventing menstruating and/or pregnant women from participating in communal fishing (Chapman, 1987, 282). The prevalence of these and other myths has been documented in the fishing industry in Canada by Roger Boshier (2001).

2.1.4 Occupational Health and Women Fish Harvesters

Work is generally understood to be beneficial to women's health (Pavalko and Smith, 1999) but the value associated with the work women do, the size of their workload, and the conditions under which their work is done can mitigate its health benefits. For many women, gender is an important determinant of their health and well-being at work. Many women work in low paying, low status jobs where hazards associated with some of these jobs may not be identified and may have negative effects on their health. As Karen Messing explains, overwhelming institutional support and interest in occupational health issues associated with male workers have delayed our understanding of risks associated with women as workers in both female and male-dominated work environments (1997, 40). In her study of repetitive strain injuries in the workforce, Penny Kome found that women workers with these injuries often have great

difficulty having their occupational health issues taken seriously and receiving compensation for them (1998, 32).

Research on women in male-dominated occupations has shown that even though these occupations get most of the attention from occupational health experts and Worker's Compensation agencies, there is no guarantee that women's movement into those jobs will mean that attention will be paid to their health on the job (Messing, 1997, 42). On the contrary, it is often assumed that health effects are the same for women and men. In male-dominated work environments, women are often expected to 'behave like men,' including the number of hours worked, their approaches to doing physical tasks, and their responses to job pressures. Sometimes women are segregated into specific repetitive tasks with little opportunity for further learning (Messing, 1995, 42).

The workspace, equipment, tools, medical insurance policies, and expectations related to schedule flexibility in male-dominated work environments can create numerous pressures and health problems for women. These include risks to mental health resulting from sexist attitudes and habits of employers, colleagues and women themselves; the risk of fatigue and stress due to conflict between family responsibilities and job requirements that reflect male lifestyles; real or imagined risks for reproduction, although we now know that almost all conditions and work environments which are dangerous to pregnant women are also dangerous to men; and, finally, risk of injury due to women doing certain jobs using equipment in an environment designed for male bodies (Messing, 1991, 83).

The average woman is a different size and shape from the average man. Without adequate training and adjustment to tasks, women may risk accidents, backache, shoulder and joint problems (Messing, 1991, 69). In a study of women on the Hibernia project a number of examples were found where women's safety was put at risk due to inadequate easing into trades work (Grzetic *et al.*, 1996, 51). Also, women reported that their personal protective clothing was often too big for the average woman, thereby putting them at further risk.

A report on occupational health in Newfoundland's fishing industry in the 1980's by Williams and Neis raises a number of concerns about the work women do in the fish processing sector. They found that women plant workers, particularly those who were married, seemed to be under a greater degree of work-related stress than male workers because of the nature of their work experiences – concentration in lower-paid repetitive and fast-paced jobs, and additional responsibilities for children and the home (1990, 38). Overall they found a variety of stress-related symptoms among plant workers including high rates of absenteeism, sleeplessness, fatigue, irritability, anxiety, appetite problems, depression, stomach pains, chest pains, rashes, colds and flus, bladder infections, respiratory ailments, and job dissatisfaction (1990, 21).

Theo Nichols argues that social science makes an important contribution to the study of death and injuries at work by challenging dominant individualized approaches. In his research, he looks for the social and economic determinants of accidents that he says are often played down or ignored in accident investigations (1999, 88). Research into risk

and occupational health and safety in the fishing industry has focused on three main areas: technological change and its effects on work environments aboard fishing vessels, the interaction of socio-economic factors with working conditions and job satisfaction, and social and economic factors influencing fishers' awareness and perception of physical risks (Binkley, 1995, 12). As noted above, other researchers such as Boshier (2001) have focused on the use of myths and superstitions by fishermen and their links with risk-taking, education and safety.

Marian Binkley's 1995 book entitled *Risks, Danger and Rewards in the Nova Scotia Offshore Fishery*, provides an analysis of the risks involved in working as deep sea fishers. She uses a broad framework that considers both the work environment which includes legislation, technology use and education, establishing links with work conditions and the health of fishery workers and their families. Over a number of years, she collected data using a combination of methods – statistical analysis, participant observation, surveys, and formal and informal interviews with individual fishermen, their wives, and key informants in government, the fishing industry and in the medical profession, to determine the work environment as well as the occupational health and safety concerns of these fishery workers. She found that attempts to make fishing boats safer places to work have mainly focused on attempts to control the work environment. She says that such strategies may be futile because, while they may be appropriate for land-based work environments, they are usually found to be inadequate in fishery work. Unlike work on shore, the work environment on a fishing vessel is inherently uncontrollable and the

industry is rife with uncertainty both in terms of the weather, health of fish stocks, the size of the catch and the prices paid for it (157). She calls for more proactive strategies such as industry-wide assessments of new technologies and regulations tailored specifically to the fishing industry (158). Given that Binkley's study is done on offshore workers where the labour force is almost exclusively male, the gender dimension of fishery work and the impact of safety legislation and working conditions on women's health is absent in her work.

Research on health and safety in the Newfoundland inshore fishery done by Michael Murray and Mark Dolomount (1994) focused on the small-boat sector. It involved a combination of interviews with fish harvesters and representatives of fishery organizations and a mail-out survey questionnaire to identify safety attitudes and practices of fish harvesters. The aims of this study were to learn more about how to prevent accidents on the water and to develop a safety course for fish harvesters. Consideration was also given to the impact of recent regulatory changes on fish harvesters' work routines and behaviours. They identified four factors that were the main contributors to accidents and injuries in fishing and all are closely related to individual behaviour on the water. The most important was the adoption of dangerous fishing practices in recent years, followed by a perception of the work environment as a dangerous place, consumption of alcohol, and fish harvesters' opposition to restrictions placed on fishing vessels (Murray and Dolomount, 1994).

The survey conducted in the above research focused on the socio-economic environment in the fishery and why some fish harvesters were becoming more willing to take risks. They found that with restructuring, new DFO policies and practices were putting inshore fish harvesters under a number of pressures which were contributing to greater risk-taking and worry among fish harvesters. The authors recommended that management of scarce fishing resources consider in advance the impact of restrictions and regulations on fishing practices (1994, 9-3). Unfortunately, there is no consideration given in either of these studies to the increasing presence of women in the inshore fishery or the health and safety concerns of women fish harvesters.

In November, 2000, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans - Coast Guard, released a report entitled: *Fishing Vessel Safety Review (less than 65 feet)*. In this report, they described the changing patterns in search and rescue (SAR) incidents and fatalities related to fishing off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. They found that between 1993 and 1999, there was a 31% decrease in vessels registered under 65 feet. In 1993 they recorded 193 incidents but in 1999 they recorded 382 – an increase in incidents of 49%. They found that the most common cause of these incidents was mechanical failure, causing vessels to become disabled (DFO, 6) and a trend that showed more incidents to be occurring further offshore (DFO, A9). Another important finding was that between 1993 and 2000, vessels under 25 feet fishing groundfish and lobster showed a higher rate of fatalities (DFO, 8) than vessels in other classes. Several root causes of fishing vessel accidents were determined from reports made by responsible agencies and by conducting a

literature review. Those causes included:

- a willingness by fishermen to take risks in a very harsh environment;
- an overall lack of safety culture among fishermen that is manifested in poor seamanship practices, low priority in the carriage of safety and survival equipment, and subordination of safety for economic gains;
- inadequate training and education;
- an inadequate structural arrangement whereby safety providers establish and implement inspections, compliance, and prevention programs;
- a link between fleet viability and the economic means to properly equip for safety;
- a reluctance by safety providers to impose mandatory safety regimes;
- a reluctance by fishermen to accept mandatory safety regimes; and,
- external influences such as environmental factors and fish management regimes that do not give adequate consideration to safety issues and may lead to fishers taking extra risk (DFO, 10).

It is significant that from the point of view of this report, the main cause of increasing incidents seems to be rooted in the a variety of inadequacies among individual fisherman. It is important to note that no fish harvesters – women or men were consulted in the course of writing this report. Indeed, women fish harvesters were not even mentioned and no gender analysis was done on any data utilized for this report, including data on injuries, incidents and fatalities recorded by the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC). Another shortcoming with this report is its narrow conception of occupational health and its traditional focus on physical injuries. This ignores any recognition of stress-related illness which is a growing problem and may be one of the ways in which inequalities in society affect people's health (Wilkinson, 1996). Many of these issues will be addressed in this thesis.

2.1.5 Fisheries Professionalization

An important aspect of fisheries restructuring since the mid 1990s has been professionalization, a strategy adopted to control access to fishing licenses and to reduce the number of fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 1996, the provincial government passed the *Fish Harvesters Act* which requires that all fish harvesters in the province be certified by the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board (PFHCB). Certification is established on three levels: apprentice, level I and level II. When the Act was passed, fish harvesters in DFO's registration system were 'grandparented' into professionalization at all three levels. All fish harvesters except those at Level II are required to have a specified number of hours fishing with a Level II harvester and a range of education/training credits in order to upgrade to the next certification level. Only fish harvesters at Level II can obtain a fishing license (PFHCB, November, 2000).

Professionalization and certification, often described by FFAW union representatives and others as 'grassroots initiatives,' were put in place ostensibly to protect the livelihood of inshore fish harvesters by limiting access to fishing to full-time fish harvesters, ensuring that fish harvesters are trained and qualified through a combination of on-the-job and classroom training, and addressing some of the health and safety concerns within the industry through training. There seems to be great support for its aims to recognize the number of years worked and secure a place in the fishery for those who have invested the greatest time and effort. However, grassroots support for professionalization is uneven. The disagreement voiced by fish harvesters focuses on the

way professionalization is being carried out. For example, in January, 2001, the *Prawn Newsletter* out of Richmond, B.C. reprinted a letter written by a group of fish harvesters from Newfoundland and Labrador who voiced their discontent with the way professionalization was being implemented. They disagreed with the PFHCB requirement for access to information on taxes and income from employment and EI in order to determine a harvester's right to certification, claiming that this is an invasion of privacy. They also disagreed with the PFHCB's Code of Ethics which requires each fish harvester to be a member in good standing of a recognized fisheries union or co-operative.

A number of researchers and writers have criticized the philosophical grounding of professionalization initiatives such as those in engineering, teaching, medicine, policing and fisheries. Salling Olesen, whose work documents the way professional identities are constructed by examining life histories, suggests that the impact of professionalization should be studied in relation to trends in the workplace and in the broader society. He explains that institutions promote professionalization schemes based upon a notion of a reflexive, knowledge-based society where rational actors – the so-called 'professionals' – make choices as individuals, disassociated from historical and material circumstances. He describes reflexivity as having a 'democratic deficit.' It is, "a characteristic of modernity [that is] not an individual, but a societal quality, organized in the division of labour and differentiation of individuals' conditions for learning and knowing" (2000, 3, 4).

Such criticisms of professionalization initiatives have been reiterated by other researchers who have studied more closely the potential implications of professionalization

for women. In her book *Professions and Patriarchy*, Anne Witz traces the impact on women of the professionalization of the medical field during the late 1800s. She writes that establishing medicine as a profession entailed a shift in the location of women's work from the private (domestic) sphere to the public (market) sphere, as well as structural changes in the work that excluded women from well-paying and high-status jobs. The justification for such drastic changes involved devaluing women's skills and positing their medical work as inefficient and ineffective compared to the new 'scientific,' institutional solutions being designed by men. Another important characteristic of the professionalization process that placed women at a disadvantage was their lack of access to the occupation-based organizations and institutions that supported men in establishing medicine in the market (1992, 82).

Similar issues with professionalization have been raised in the literature on women in the fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. Susan Williams has documented how, for decades, women's work in the Newfoundland fishery has been dismissed as unproductive. She argues that the professionalization process recently put in place could limit recognition of women's work in fishing enterprises which was finally being acknowledged prior to the moratoria (1996, 49). Nancy Robbins documents how women affected by the cod moratorium felt it was important that measures be taken to ensure that women are recognized in professionalization processes (1997, 131). The strong links between professionalization and training are criticized by Palmer and Sinclair (1997) who argue that the rhetoric of improved training and increased social status may be a façade for the

real purpose of professionalization which is to restrict access to certification and hence, access to licenses and the right to fish (1997, 94).

Research done in Norway by Eva Munk-Madsen found that a criterion for professionalization based on requiring full-time fishing excludes "small-scale fisherfolk who combine fishing with other activities. [This] is an effective exclusion of women. The professionalization process thus implies a protection of resources as male property" (1998, 236).

It is important to examine the effect of professionalization on women in terms of the restrictions and potential opportunities and benefits that may arise. Potential benefits for women may result from professionalization's increased emphasis on formal education and training. At times, women in male dominated occupations have difficulty gaining skills from male workers in on-the-job situations (Grzetic *et al.*, 1996, 23). A more formal approach to learning may provide opportunities for women to gain necessary knowledge and skills. These may affect women's status as workers, their potential income and employment opportunities at present and in the future, and their health.

2.2 Developing a Theoretical Framework

In this research I explore the effects of recent political, social and fisheries restructuring on the lives and health of women fish harvesters. The focus on women's work, learning, and health requires studying health determinants such as employment and working conditions, physical environment, social support networks, social environment,

health services, and personal health practices and coping skills as well as the policies that influence these determinants.

The social determinants of health approach is important because it emphasizes that health status is largely determined by the interaction between broad societal-level socio-economic factors, an individual's immediate physical, social and economic environment and his/her psychological resources and coping skills. The interaction between these determinants and their impacts on people's health is not linear. Social and economic policies, for example, can affect access to work and education, which, in turn, affect income levels and that then influence health. Thus, links between physical and social environments and women's health are complex and need to be explored and developed progressively throughout the research.

Notions of nonlinearity and complexity, in terms of the interaction between people and their environments, have been addressed by Ian Scoones (1999), who developed a framework for ecological research that integrates issues related to the physical environment into the social sciences. He suggests that research focus thematically on scale and non-linear interaction across hierarchies; variability in space and time that encompasses historical analyses, structure, and effects on agency; and integrating both scientific and local knowledge related to social and physical environments (496). This thesis focuses on the gender dynamics of many of these themes put forward by Scoones, especially the perspectives of women fish harvesters.

Researchers have developed a number of strategies in order to effectively study the contingent aspects of people's health – in particular social and environmental contexts and situations. Some have found that bringing together complementary bodies of knowledge is important in order to construct a theoretical framework that more closely reflects the context and circumstances under study. For example, Health Canada's Atlantic Children's Evaluation Sub-committee Working Group (ACES-WG) draws on literature based in social ecology, determinants of health, community-based empowerment, and social and economic inclusion to construct a theoretical framework for evaluating their community-based children's programs (Health Canada – Population and Public Health Branch, 2001).

In this thesis, the social determinants of health approach benefits from the integration of other bodies of knowledge in order to allow a focus on the particular, local and historical context. I resist grand theories where women are often posited as a universal category, theories and methods are gender-blind, and individual behaviour is the focus of attention and the target for change. Grand theories, without a focus on gender and the local context, are highly problematic when trying to understand social and environmental policies, and women's health in a particular environment. I find they lead us astray. In their recent research, Neis *et al.* developed a framework that drew on the social determinants of health, social ecology and feminist theories to link fisheries restructuring and its effects on the health of women fish processors in Newfoundland and Labrador (Neis *et al.*, 2001, 26). I take a similar approach in this research.

A social ecological perspective extends the traditional human ecological focus on the relationship between humans and their physical environments to include the social, institutional and cultural contexts of people-environment relations (Stokols 1996: 285). Like feminist theory, it can help us focus more clearly on the policy-related sources of environment, inequalities and ill health. This approach is helpful because it considers not only the relationship between environmental restructuring and individual health determinants but also potential interactions between different kinds of restructuring and different health determinants. Social ecology allows for analysis based on the capacity of particular social and physical environments to promote health and the cumulative impact of multiple conditions on physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being over extended periods of time (Neis and Taylor *et al.*, 2001).

Feminist theory is critical in helping us understand gender as a determinant of women's health and connections with the master narratives associated with restructuring. Women's lives tend to be structured very differently than men's. Their experiences of work, education, earning an adequate income, and their working conditions are often very different. Doing research on women's health requires an approach that places women and gender relations at the center of the research.

One key approach to exploring gender relations in this research is narrative analysis. This approach is not often used in health research, although some researchers evaluating health promotion programs are finding it very useful in their work (Labonte and Feather, 1996). Narrative is a basic way of making meaning of our lives (Fiske, 1987,

128). Women's narratives are particularly interesting because they often reveal the dynamics of gender, which tend to be ignored in men's narratives (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, 5). They reveal the many ways women attempt to negotiate, resist and comply with hierarchical and patriarchal systems within which they live and work (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, 5). Feminist writings about women's narratives have the potential to develop a "positive representation of women's subjectivity as nonunitary, fragmented, conflicted, fluid, and in flux" (Bloom, 1998, 63). Through analysis of women fish harvesters' narratives, I will explore ways their gender identities are socially constructed, and the relationship between them and society in the reproduction and perpetuation of gender norms and especially, women's subordinate status within fish harvesting. Of course, this requires attention to the dynamics of power relations between women and men, and between women and male-dominated institutions.

The effects of institutionalized, gendered norms on women's agency and choices is a central theme in this research and in women's narratives. In *The Politics of Women's Health*, philosopher Susan Sherwin argues that societal discrimination affects not only women's agency, which involves their ability to act, but more importantly, their autonomy. Unlike Scoones (1999), she makes an important distinction between agency and autonomy. Agency is simply one's ability to act, whereas autonomy is self-determination and the ability to make choices free of the influence of oppression (1998, 12). She argues that when women's capacity for autonomy is undermined by oppression and discrimination, so are their health and well-being. Sherwin challenges traditional

perspectives of autonomy that focus on the individual and instead adopts a notion of autonomy that she refers to as “relational autonomy.” This notion broadens our understanding of autonomy from an individualized attribute often related to economics, to a human capacity that is determined by, “a full range of influential human relations, personal and public” (1998, 19).

Thinking of autonomy as a relational concept gives us a different perspective from which to view environmental restructuring, institutional policies and ways these influence women’s choices. Philosopher Susan Babbitt argues that at the core of the idea of relational autonomy lies questions of human flourishing that require, “bringing about different, more appropriate, social and political situations” that eliminate discriminatory attitudes and policies affecting women’s place, potential, and abilities (Babbitt, 1996, 45).

Inequality compromises women’s autonomy and their health and well-being (Sherwin, 1998). In order to determine the effects on women’s autonomy, we must pay attention to their narratives which tell us about the construction of inequality and the power of master narratives to determine the conditions that have historically shaped and often continue to shape women’s choices. As Sherwin says: “Minimally, autonomous persons should be able to resist oppression – not just act in compliance with it – and be able to refuse the choices oppression seems to make nearly irresistible” (1998, 33).

2.2.1 Feminist Post-Structuralist Theory

I find Henrietta Moore's use of post-structuralist theory and her notion of the construction of difference appropriate to in-depth studies of local environments. Post-structuralism is based on the idea that discourses and social practices provide a variety of positions which we take up and let go throughout our daily lives. Discourse is a term that refers to the ways we use language and other forms of communication to make sense of the world. It is understood as a partial expression of what we know, and therefore establishes contradictory and conflicting claims and subject positions. There are dominant and sub-dominant discourses that are arranged hierarchically and these often interact with each other.

Rather than focusing on the individual, post-structuralism advocates for a theory of the 'subject' which is very powerful in feminist research and should not be confused with the individual. The 'subject' is a way of being, a way of acting in the world, often dictated by dominant discourses. "Individuals ... can, and do, take up multiple subject positions within a range of discourses and social practices" (Moore, 1994, 55). In most societies, a range of discourses on gender exist and people take up gendered subject positions through engagement with multiple discourses on gender. This theoretical position has many advantages and has been used by Jane Robinson (1996) in her case study on the impact of the closure of fishplants in Trepassey, Newfoundland. Its value lies in the way it allows researchers and writers to consider aspects of women's identity such as resistance, compliance, negotiation, investment, and change as opposed to a modernist approach that

tends to present individuals and society as fixed, coherent, and without gender.

Women's narratives illustrate the many subject positions that women take up within gendered discourses, including the dominant master narratives. Given that we are the speaking voice in our narratives, the assumption is often made that we are the authors of the discourse which we are speaking. However, feminist post-structuralists argue that this is not the case. As Weedon says, it is language that constitutes us as conscious thinking subjects able to give meaning to the world and act in ways that may change it. We are all produced in language (1987, 33). In women's narratives, women's stories can appear to change dramatically, as their subjectivity shifts, fragments and is retold in a different, often more empowering light.

Gender is an important feature in how women and men experience the world. It is essentially a social construction that determines the meaning society gives to the biological fact of being female or male (Moore, 1994, 12). Therefore gender and sex are inextricably linked. Every society holds cultural beliefs about appropriate behaviors, roles and values for women and men and these have implications for women's autonomy and health. Because gender is socially constructed and embedded in discourses, the experience of being a woman is never entirely fixed. Nor are our experiences of being women entirely of our own making. Gender frames, in a powerfully real and imaginative way, the scripts we live by as we go about our daily lives.

It is important that we understand gender and the roles we have based on gender within the context of power. Moore argues that social identities are constructed around

differences based on gender, race and class, age, etc. (1994, 91). Differentiated social identities are related to the exercise of power because first, the power to define a social identity and to ascribe particular characteristics to that identity is both a political power and a political act, and second, “the very definitions of those identities are connected to normative understandings of the social order as well as to legitimations of that order” (Moore, 1994, 92). In the process of socially differentiating individuals into particular demographic groups, ideas and practices about rights and needs are defined which enable some people and not others to make claims on resources, both material and symbolic in the household and beyond (Moore, 1994, 93). Assessments of rights and needs affect women’s ability to claim resources related to work and working conditions and in their physical environment and are critical for women’s autonomy. These are strong determinants of women’s health and well-being.

One area where power has affected women’s lives in many ways is in institutionalized definitions of ‘skill.’ As Judy Wajcman explains, “skill is a social construct” and the basis for distinctions of skill has more to do with social and ideological constructions than with what is perceived on the surface – the technical knowledge and skill levels that are possessed by men but not by women (1991, 37).

Beneath such gendered distinctions lies the conscious or unconscious efforts of workers to protect and secure employment opportunities and wage levels. One such effort has been documented by Neis *et al.* (2001, 105) in training initiatives that defend men’s specific skills to the exclusion of the skills of outsiders, namely women. Traditionally,

efforts within industry and social institutions such as the education system have been by and on behalf of male workers.

Feminists have both celebrated and criticized the education system. While advocating for increased participation of women in all aspects of education, the institutions themselves have been criticized for not taking seriously their responsibility to reach out to women, to be an agent of social change and help improve women's autonomy. Rather, they are seen to be collaborating with other social institutions to control knowledge and define legitimate 'skills,' and, in doing so, perpetuate gender inequality, segregation in the labour force and class inequalities from generation to generation (Wajcman, 1991, 151). Just as gender is central to definitions of skill, it is also central to the division of labour – women are assigned responsibility for work inside the home and men are responsible for work outside the home. In capitalist economies, the (invisible) work done by women inside the home is unpaid, unrecognized, and devalued by dominant male-dominated organizations, governments and industry.

Acknowledging the gendered division of labour in fishing households in an appropriate way is crucial to this research. For many women fish harvesters, their work in fishing boats may be an extension of the fishery-related work they were engaged in onshore for years but in an unpaid capacity. This fact highlights the way women's work in fishing families challenges the (artificial) separation that divides the private (reproduction) work done in the home and the public (production) work done outside the home.

Lesley Doyal argues that studies of women's health at work should include an honest assessment of the work women do domestically (1999, 22). In order to accommodate the full range of women's work experiences in fishing families, this research broadens the notion of domestic work to include their fishery-related work in addition to their other work such as cleaning, cooking and caring in and around their homes. The lines between public and private, production and reproduction, which are male constructs and have historically served to advantage men in the workforce, become blurred when we begin to study women's experiences of work and health. In this research, the invisibility of this domestic work poses a number of potential problems for women's health and well-being, the most obvious being their workload and secondary status and ways these are transferred or challenged by their work on fishing boats.

During periods of restructuring, when positions of power are used to reassert dominance, policies may result in women losing many of the gains they have made in the past or, alternatively, they may be able to make new gains. Discourse and discursive practices often set limits on those gains based on gender, class, age, race and other differences which affect the degree to which women access resources, take on new subject positions, and imagine possibilities that influence their health and well-being. As subject positions change through political negotiation and maneuvering aimed at meeting redefined needs, so does women's ability to participate in processes that shape their day-to-day experiences and health.

Social, institutional and policy discourses and discursive practices should be seen as being actively involved in social reproduction. Moore turns traditional notions of reproduction on their head because she argues that it involves not only biological reproduction and the reproduction of the labour force, but more importantly, the production and reproduction of “persons with particular social identities, that is, persons who are appropriately differentiated socially” (1994, 90). Social reproduction produces *certain* types of gendered individuals with *certain* rights and needs as defined by dominant interests in societies. Social and economic policies and practices often place women in subordinate or disadvantaged positions where their actions are more constrained and their interests, particularly in the areas of work, training, and health, are often sacrificed in the interests of others.

It is important to remember that the nature and degree of women’s subordination varies greatly depending upon age, class, sexuality, and health. Race, and discourses related to race, for example, often intersect with gender discourses. Therefore we must be sensitive to the ways people are affected to varying degrees by power and oppression, privilege and disadvantage. It is also important to state that I do not believe that gender is *the* foundational form of oppression. However, it is an important one that is often ignored in policy research and deserving of a central focus in this thesis.

Numerous factors influence the extent to which women are able to participate in and influence decisions affecting their health and the quality of their lives. It is not enough that appropriate information be made available about decisions women have to make.

Rather, we must determine whether the systemic constraints they face can be addressed by existing policies because only by actively addressing these constraints can we truly say that fisheries restructuring, which has been associated with new policies and structures, has been effective in promoting women's autonomy, equality and health.

This section on theory has identified some of the major themes that connect environmental and social restructuring, women's daily work lives - in both paid and unpaid work, and their health and well-being. The theoretical framework has been developed for this research and incorporates elements from the social determinants of health approach, a social ecological perspective and gender-based analysis. In the following section I will provide an overview of the methodological aspects associated with this research.

2.3 Methodology

A large proportion of medical and social determinants of health research gives priority to quantitative data, drawn from large samples in census or workforce data. Work done on the Whitehall II study by Jane Ferrie (1997), Pat Armstrong's (1995) gender analysis of workforce restructuring in Canada, and Health Canada's Reports on the Health of Canadians (see for example, 1999) are some examples of studies that explore broad societal patterns using quantitative data. We have seen that other research on restructuring often ignores the need for a gender analysis.

The research in this thesis, while using quantitative data to identify broad social patterns of change and gendered institutions, gives priority to narrative data from

interviews done with women fish harvesters. The strategy I use is more in line with the restructuring studies done in rural communities by Neis and Grzetic in Newfoundland and Labrador and Belinda Leach in Ontario. These researchers use case studies of specific contexts to investigate the ways inequalities are constructed and gendered in restructuring practices. They also nicely combine qualitative and quantitative data (Neis *et al.*, 2001; Leach and Winson, 1995). It should be noted, however, that both Neis and Leach tend to use a socialist political economy approach to study the effects of restructuring on people's lives whereas my approach involves post-structuralism and feminist narrative analysis.

Qualitative research methods have always been important to feminists doing research in universities and at the community level. In recent years, qualitative research that gives priority to women's experiences is gaining in importance in both academic disciplines and in policy areas. In their education research, Andrew Gitlin and Robyn Russel (1994) promote the use of methodologies involving interpretive approaches that give priority to experiential knowledge. Their use of interpretive approaches challenges positivist research that takes objective research, devoid of any notion of experience, ideology or politics as the basis for determining the desirable goals in teaching and education (Gitlin and Russell, 1994, 181-182). Other researchers such as Patti Lather, argue openly for research that is ideological because of its potential to challenge the false homogeneity that is so often found in gender-blind social research (1991, 52).

While research methods must be appropriate for the issues that are being explored, Lather argues that we must be aware of the role of validity criteria in critical research:

“Efforts to produce social knowledge useful in the struggle for a more equitable world must pursue rigor as well as relevance” (1991, 68). She suggests that techniques such as triangulation, reflexivity and checks with research participants should be utilized to ensure validity (1991, 66). I use member checks and triangulation which involves the use of multiple data sources – both qualitative and quantitative.

The use of multiple data sources is recognized by Scoones in his discussion of methodological directions in ecological research. He writes that:

a range of methods – quantitative, qualitative, textual – drawing from both the natural and social sciences inform a more integrated type of study which investigates real processes of environmental and landscape change; the social, political, and economic processes that influence and are conditioned by environmental change; as well as the cultural symbols, interpretations, and meanings of such change (1999, 491).

Multiple data sources help expose the gendered and historical aspects of women’s place as fish harvesters and links this to social and economic policies and practices related to the fishing industry. Themes identified in women’s narratives are also sought out in quantitative data. The result is that some of the critical themes are broadened in interesting ways to include all fish harvesters – women and men. The narrative and statistical data reinforce (or possibly even contradict) each other in powerful ways that expand our knowledge about women’s position in the fish harvesting workforce. They help us understand their working conditions and the effects of restructuring on women in fishing families over the past decade.

The use of multimethods to build confidence in the strength of feminist research is examined by Shulamit Reinharz. She explains that

one can be confident that a range of methods allows a range of individuals or circumstances to be understood in a responsive way. Important issues concerning women's lives can be understood in a complex and thorough fashion ... Multimethod research creates the opportunity to put texts or people in contexts, thus providing a richer and far more accurate interpretation (1992, 213).

The use of narratives as a valid source of data in health research is becoming more accepted. Health promotion researchers Ronald Labonte and Joan Feather have focused on the use of narratives and dialogue in the evaluation of community-based health promotion programs. They argue that quantitative data (for example, from surveys) are inappropriate as a primary method for studying people and their relationships: "there is a growing argument ... that abstract and conventional science norms are insufficient to make sense of what health promotion is and how its effects should be evaluated" (1996, 6).

2.3.1 Description of Methods

This research is based upon sixteen in-depth interviews with women fish harvesters from communities along the west and south coasts of Newfoundland (NAFO zones 3Ps, 3Pn, and 4R) and one key informant interview with a representative of the PFHCB. These interviews with women consisted of a combination of open-ended and fixed-response questions (see Appendix A for interview schedule). Most of the fixed-response questions

concerned aspects of women's emotional and physical health. These were combined with open-ended questions in the various sections of the interview which corresponded to determinants of health such as employment, working conditions, education and training, social support networks, and personal coping behaviours. Therefore, the determinants of health not only provided a broad theoretical framework, it also served as a methodological framework.

Several approaches were used to help identify research participants: direct community contact with women fish harvesters and contact by representatives of organizations such as the Bay St. George Status of Women Council and the PFHCB. Three people helped out by acting as facilitators to help identify study participants. One person is affiliated with the newly formed group *Women of the Fishery*, another is employed with the Bay St. George Status of Women Council, and another works with the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board. Two of these people also took the time to review the research questions and interview schedule and make suggestions for change. In each case, these people used the same protocol in identifying women participants. When women were contacted, they read a brief overview about me and this research to them. If a woman agreed to be interviewed, facilitators asked for permission to release her name and phone number to me. I followed up with a phone call, further discussion about the research topic and then set a time for us to meet for the interview.

2.3.2 Data Collection

I began my fieldwork in November, 2000 by interviewing five women fish harvesters from the south coast of the Island. While these interviews went very well, I had hoped to talk to women who took training but, unfortunately, none of these women had done any. After those initial interviews, I recognized the importance of professionalization issues for women fish harvesters and the need to study this issue in greater depth. I also wanted to interview women who had taken some fisheries-related training. Therefore, I wrote a letter to the Executive Director of the PFHCB asking him for assistance with finding women for my study who had taken training. I also requested information from their database of current certification and training initiatives, and permission to interview a key representative from their organization. They agreed to assist me and provided all the information I required.

In February, 2001, I completed an additional eleven face-to-face semi-formal interviews with women fish harvesters on the west and south-west coasts of the Island. The semi-formal nature of the interviews allowed room for women to explain, in their own words, what it is like to work as a fish harvester, the level of supports available to them, the impact of fisheries and EI restructuring on them at home, at work, and on the community, and impacts of these recent changes on their health and well-being. The interviews also contained a variety of fixed-response questions. These questions were mainly about working conditions, health and safety, and coping behaviours.

On average, the interviews lasted two hours. Interviews were transcribed and with the exception of one interview, all tapes were erased. One woman requested that I send her the tape and a copy of the interview once it was transcribed so she could make changes, if necessary. After I sent her the tape and interview transcript, we spoke on the phone twice and I made the changes she requested. I then sent her another copy of the interview.

The interview with a representative from the PFHCB was less structured than the ones with women fish harvesters. In the interview, I was interested in knowing about professionalization, the role of the certification board, whether professionalization training programs are designed with women's needs in mind, and whether or not organizations and/or institutions involved in fisheries training would be flexible in designing and delivering training to address women's needs in the industry at this time.

Once a draft report of the findings was produced I contacted those interviewed and told them that the draft report was ready for them to review and provide feedback. This process involved mailing a letter, then two weeks later sending a draft report to those who agreed to review it. This was followed by feedback discussions over the phone that provided another opportunity for both myself and the interviewees to discuss the research results in order to identify areas missed in the research and clarify recommendations for policy change. These feedback/phone conversations ranged from fifteen minutes to one half hour.

A request was submitted in writing to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) for statistical data to determine the number of women holding fishing licenses in Newfoundland and Labrador by NAFO area. They were not able to provide sex segregated data but did provide me with the names of current license holders and the licenses they each hold. Based on their first names, I added a sex category to their data. The PFHCB, which does maintain a sex category in its database, helped with this task in cases where I was not able to determine the sex of the individual from the first name. When this work was completed, I deleted the names from the DFO data.

A request for Statistics Canada (Census) data was submitted to the Newfoundland Statistics Agency in the provincial government to determine overall trends in the number of women and men fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador between 1971 and 1996. They too were very helpful and complied with my request. Statistical data for Newfoundland and Labrador were reviewed in order to assess trends in the number of women and men fishing, the number of women and men holding licenses, the current certified fish harvester workforce, and an analysis of fish harvester training through the PFHCB and the Marine Institute's Community Based Fisheries Program.

2.3.3 Ethical Considerations

All the women interviewed fished with their husbands and my understanding of the situation is that most women working on fishing boats in Newfoundland and Labrador do fish with their husbands. I did not attempt to find women in other work situations such as

those who work as part of a crew but not with their husbands, or those who fish alone, although I am aware of women fish harvesters in other parts of the province who do not fish with their husbands.

Early in the research I decided not to ask women questions about their income. My readings and discussions with women fish harvesters before I began this research heightened my awareness of the stigma and suspicion that is sometimes associated with women's role in the fisheries. One woman described this stigma in the following manner:

The way the EI system is set up and the way the government got the system set up, you're an independent business as a fish harvester or a fisherman so there's always been room to manoeuvre that with companies, where you can go out and get your catch and put it in whoever's name you saw fit. So, with the decline in the quotas and whatever, the perfect opportunity was there to sell fish in your wife's name even if she didn't fish. Now I would look up to you and say that she might not fish but it's likely that she did the bulk of the work for that business on land. So if that fish was going in her name, she was only helping with it anyway to start with but a stigma got attached to us (01-04-07²).

Because I wanted the women I interviewed to feel they could trust me, and that talking to me would not compromise their incomes in any way, I felt it was best to omit questions about their income. However, although I took this precaution, a couple of women interviewed were still quite cautious because they are aware that women fish harvesters are treated with suspicion in the larger community. Even though I gave them

²The coding used for interview excerpts throughout this thesis contains the following format: the first number refers to the geographic area where the interview took place, the second refers to the specific interview done in that area, and the third to the page number of the interview transcript.

my assurances, they did not know me and did not know if I could really be trusted. In these few interviews, women took every opportunity to stress to me that they really do go out everyday and they really do work aboard the boat. Here's what one woman had to say early on in her interview:

I: Can you tell me what you call yourself?

FH: Well I guess a helper I would say. I fishes with my husband.

I: Do you ever call yourself a fish harvester or a fisher woman?

FH: Oh yes. I does my share.

I: So if someone asked what you do for a living what would you say?

FH: I fishes. [Laughs] That's the truth because I'm out there every day.

I: What's your current status in the fishery with the certification board?

FH: Well I'm level two this year and I'm proud of it too.

I: What year did you start fishing?

FH: In 1993. I found some receipts from 1993. I couldn't find any from 1992 so I guess I started in 1993 (02-01-02).

Other women fish harvesters were more relaxed about their participation in this research. This was especially true of the women I interviewed as a result of contacts made by other women fish harvesters and women in the Bay St. George Status of Women Council office in Stephenville. Their lack of concern about confidentiality and anonymity was illustrated in an incident that happened during one trip to a small community on the west coast. I arrived there on a Sunday afternoon and that evening I interviewed one

woman fish harvester. The next morning, while interviewing another woman, the phone rang when we were half way through the interview. On the phone was the woman I had interviewed the previous evening who happened to be a very good friend of the woman I was interviewing that morning. She saw my car in the driveway and phoned to ask me if I would like to come back to her place for lunch. She had just finished cooking salt fish, potatoes and scrunchins. Of course, I accepted.

Consent forms were used with all research participants and confidentiality and anonymity were assured to the best of my ability. For those who agreed to be taped, a separate consent form was used (see Appendix B for consent forms). All the tapes but one, as noted, were erased once they were transcribed. Two women did not want to be taped. Another woman who was concerned about the quality of her English, agreed to be taped only on the condition that I send her the tapes and a transcript of the interview. I complied with her request and after I sent her the tapes and the typed transcript, we spent some time talking on the phone, correcting grammar and adding to the content of the interview until she was satisfied with it. This, of course, provided me with a wonderful opportunity to learn a lot more about some of the critical issues facing women fish harvesters and it made the interview data much richer.

One of the main goals of feminist research is to try to correct both the invisibility and misrepresentation of women's experiences and to work towards finding ways to end women's inequality. In this research I followed the lead of feminist researcher Patti Lather who argues that "we must go beyond a concern for more and better data to a concern for

research as praxis. What I suggest is that we consciously use our research to help participants understand and change their situations" (1991, 57). Lather's words act as an important reminder that collaborative research should be both empowering for the researcher and the researched as well as being advocacy oriented.

An opportunity to do some advocacy arose when the interviews were all transcribed and I realized that a large proportion of the women had said they did not have adequate navigation skills or the ability to do basic maintenance on an outboard engine; yet many of them worked alone with their husbands on the water. I felt this was both an ethical issue and a safety issue and that organizations involved in fisheries safety issues and training should know about this finding. With another fishing season about to get underway, I wrote a letter to the education coordinator of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board and later, along with one of my thesis advisors, I met with the education coordinator, the executive director and the chair of the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board, and a representative from the Fish Harvester's Resource Centre to discuss this issue further. With input from two women fish harvesters involved in this study, I urged these organizations to work with women fish harvesters to put training in place to address areas where women need training. Since then, a community-based Basic Safety course for fish harvesters has been developed by the Board and the Marine Institute. Fish harvesters are being trained as instructors and one woman was selected for this training. While the courses have not begun yet in rural communities, to date, the vast majority of applicants are women.

A similar reciprocal approach was taken with the analysis of the PFHCB and Marine Institute data. When I completed the gender analysis, I provided both organizations with written summaries of these data. In one case, we had a meeting and I went through the analysis with them, highlighting areas of concern and answering any questions.

Many of the women who participated in this research do not work closely with other women fish harvesters. The interview was, for many of them, a rare opportunity to talk in-depth about the work they do as women. I approached this research as both an exploration of women's work as fish harvesters and a celebration of it. Therefore, I tried to make the interviews a positive experience that affirmed the importance and the value of their work. At the conclusion of one of the interviews, one woman said, "I tell you, I does a lot. I never realized it till I was talking to you. I wants a raise" (02-08-08).

The use of semi-formal interviews was important in helping to create a relaxed, conversational style during the interviews. Because I am about the same age as many of these women, conversation was easy. This allowed for a give and take between the women and myself. They educated me about fisheries issues which I admit I did not know much about. In return, I gave them information about such things as the Marine Institute's guidelines for community based training. Occasionally, the conversational style and reciprocal nature of the interviews helped participants understand something about their particular situations. In one interview a woman told me that a few years ago she almost drowned in an incident while fishing. Later in the interview the following conversation

took place:

I: Do you ever worry about being injured at sea?

FH: Not being injured. I worry about death at sea, drowning. Injury doesn't concern me a whole lot. When you get out there on those rough seas and you're wondering whether you're going to make it ashore, then I tend to worry. It's only gotten worse in this last two years. As I'm getting older I'm getting more nervous. But I have no real concern about injury.

I: When did that incident happen when you wanted to jump overboard?

FH: About two years ago.

I: Could that possibly have scared you, made you nervous?

FH: I think maybe it did because now I'm really wary of the weather but one time it didn't bother me at all. I'd go out in anything. Now I look at my husband and I say, 'Uh Uh, I'm not going. If you want to go, go on but I'm not going.' I never wore a life jacket in my life until this past year. That's how nervous I've been getting these past two years. I don't know if it would do much for me. I can swim but my husband can't. I mean, what would happen if he fell over? What would I do? I could throw him a life buoy but that's it. How do I get him back in the boat? He's heavier than me. I worry about all that stuff too. It's continuous stress when you're home and on the water (02-02-05).

2.3.4 Data Analysis

After the interviews were completed and transcribed and the statistical data received, I set out to analyze the data. I began with the typed transcripts of the interviews which I kept together in a binder. I read each interview and identified issues related to work, education, and health and safety that were identified by the women. When I was finished identifying the issues in each interview, I listed them all on one page at the front of that interview. When I was finished all the interviews, I compared all the issues and

identified the themes.

While I was identifying issues from women's narratives, I also pulled out women's responses to the closed-ended questions and put that information in a spreadsheet. I organized the spreadsheet data so that it was consistent with the categories in the interview schedule – work history, current work, education, training, etc. When I was finished compiling the data, I printed the spreadsheet, put it in another binder and analyzed it for trends and concerns that women identified related to work conditions, education/training, and physical and emotional health issues. As I proceeded with my analysis, the themes identified from the interviews were analyzed beside the themes in the spreadsheet.

The statistical data from the Marine Institute, the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board, and the DFO were imported into spreadsheets and reorganized so that they could be analyzed for gender patterns. Most of this was fairly straightforward and accomplished with sort and chart-drawing commands. The most challenging statistical data analysis was the fish harvesters data from the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board which had to be analyzed by NAFO zone, gender, level of certification, and age.

2.4 Conclusions

In this chapter I have outlined some of the theoretical challenges related to studying women's health. I describe the way I have addressed those challenges and

developed a framework that integrates the social determinants of health with social ecology and feminist post-structuralist theories. The theoretical framework draws mainly on the work of Barbara Neis, Henrietta Moore, Susan Sherwin and Susan Babbitt.

I have also laid out my methodological approach to this research which involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis, and feedback. The primary source of data is qualitative and comes from sixteen interviews done with women fish harvesters. Quantitative data relates to women's participation in fishing and comes from government employment statistics, professionalization and certification data, and training data.

In the next chapter I begin my exploration of women fish harvesters' work experiences by introducing the women interviewed in this study. I describe their work responsibilities, work loads, and relations with their husbands, co-workers and fisheries institutions. I also provide an overview of the major social, economic, and environmental changes that form the context within which women in inshore fishing families were living and working in 2001. Using statistical data, I also explore some of the changing demographics of the fish harvester workforce in Newfoundland and Labrador.

CHAPTER 3:
WOMEN FISH HARVESTERS' WORK ENVIRONMENT,
RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RELATIONS

3.1 Introduction

One of the key themes of the social determinants of health approach is that people's health is embedded in the social and economic conditions of their lives. In fisheries research done by Marian Binkley (1995, 14), she argues that studies related to work should combine both analyses of work processes and of the impact on work of external factors in the broader social environment. This broader context provides a basis for better understanding some of women's experiences and choices, and is needed in order to fully understand the impacts of restructuring on women's health and well-being. The focus of this chapter is on the effects of restructuring on women fish harvesters' entry into harvesting; the broader context of their work environments; work responsibilities at home, on fishing boats, and in their communities; and their relations at work, with people in their communities, and in fishery-related institutions. This analysis is guided mainly by interviews done with the sixteen women fish harvesters who participated in this study.

I begin by introducing the women, reviewing their work backgrounds, and exploring aspects of their work as fish harvesters. I describe some of the household processes that led them to be working on fishing boats, and that have shaped their identities as fish harvesters. I describe the nature and scope of their work both on the boat and as ground crew, their working conditions, the dynamic between these women

and their husbands, and their relations with other people and fishery-related institutions. These experiences are viewed in the historical and gendered context of patriarchal fishing families and within the context of the political, economic, and environmental changes that have taken place in inshore fishing families over the past decade.

3.2 Women in the Study

The sixteen women fish harvesters interviewed for this research range in ages from 36 to 56; the average age is 42. They are all married and they all fish with their husbands. The husbands' ages range from 38-57; the average age being 46. The number of years these women have been fishing ranges from one year to twenty years: the average time spent fishing is ten years.

Ten women interviewed fish alone with their husbands all the time. One other woman fishes some species alone with her husband and other species on a bigger boat with an additional two crew members. Five other women fish aboard boats that have three to five crew members all the time. Table #1 provides, for each woman interviewed, the size of their boat(s) and the maximum distances they go on the water to fish.

Interviewee #	Boat Size	Maximum Distance (miles)
1	34'11" and an open boat (lobster)	21
2	26' open	23
3	34'11"	23
4	34'11" and an open boat	21
5	32' open	15
6	20' open	3
7	16' open	3
8	22' open	15
9	20' open	14
10	34'11" and an open boat (lobster)	8
11	24'11" open	3-4
12	32' and 19' open	8
13	22' open	14
14	19' open	3
15	18' open	3
16	23' open	5

Table #1: Boat Sizes and Maximum Distances Traveled for Women Interviewees

Women interviewed were asked about their history in the paid workforce prior to going fishing. Of the sixteen women interviewed, two had not worked for pay before going fishing. Working outside the home for pay was common among the remaining fourteen women, who had an average of two jobs each prior to going fishing. Four had worked full-time for an average of eleven years and two had worked part-time for an

average of six years in areas outside the fishing industry. These jobs were mainly clerical positions in offices or retail stores. Eight women had worked in fish plants for an average of 5.5 years each. All but two had left fish processing before the moratorium was called in 1992 and only two of these women had qualified for NCARP/TAGS.

The eight women who had worked processing fish left the fish plants for a variety of reasons. One had moved away temporarily. For another, shift work conflicted with her family responsibilities. Another quit because she was treated poorly while pregnant; another left fish plant work to go fishing; and another woman was laid off and never recalled after a union vote that she had helped to organize. In total, three women left other jobs to go fishing: one quit a fish processing job, another quit a retail clerical position and the third left a temporary (on-call) clerical job. Two women were drawing unemployment insurance when they started fishing.

The work histories of the women exhibit many of the traditional patterns of working class women in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. At various times, depending on their household responsibilities and income requirements, they entered and exited the workforce. Some took time away from paid work when their children were young, but this usually only lasted for a few years. The women all said they sought work outside the home mainly for financial reasons but also for other reasons including social interaction and support. One woman said she worked for pay because she liked the independence it gave her and she enjoyed the challenge. Some women had struggled with part-time jobs while trying to balance the demands associated with their husband's work in the fishery,

their responsibilities at home, and the need to “make ends meet.”

3.3 Women's Work as Fish Harvesters

The benefits of employment for women's physical and emotional health are well documented (Ostrove and Adler, 1998, 460). Paid work often provides not only an income, but also a sense of identity and meaning, as well as opportunities for personal development and social interaction. Working conditions are an important determinant of women's health. Gender differences in both employment and working conditions affect health by influencing attention to occupational health issues in the workplace, access to such things as on-the-job training, advancement, union representation and other supports, and options for stress reduction (Matthews *et al.*, 1998, 1423). Gender differences are also evident in women's concentration in high demand, low control work situations, where they are often exposed to highly repetitive work situations. Women are at greater risk of underemployment and being concentrated in highly emotional care giving roles (Love *et al.*, 1997: 6). When women and men work in the same jobs, they often have different tasks and there often exists an implicit hierarchy where men exert more power and control. This means that women's jobs involve somewhat different occupational health risks than men's even when they are working in the same physical environment. Their responsibility for unpaid work at home means that women often experience greater workloads and greater difficulty than men in combining work and family and this can make paid work more stressful for women (Health Canada, 1999, 57).

Women's work experiences in the fishery are determined by a range of individual and institutional factors that are influenced by household patriarchy and institutionalized gender norms. Some of the most important determinants of their work and learning experiences include the kind of relationship they have with their husbands and the level of support they get from them to help build their self-confidence to work safely and competently on the water. Other important factors include the amount of input women had in the decision to go fishing, the timing of when they started fishing – whether they started before or after the downturn in the groundfish fisheries, and whether they had developed fishery-related skills before they went fishing in a paid capacity. The size of the fishing enterprise – the size of the boat and the number of species they are licensed to fish, also tend to affect their experiences working as fish harvesters, the working conditions they have to endure, and the ability of their family to survive in the restructured inshore fisheries.

Women's working conditions and health are also affected by policies and practices at the institutional level. The levels of recognition and support women receive as workers from fisheries, government and training organizations are a very important consideration. Institutions can play a powerful role in countering the invisibility women experience in the fishing industry by helping to improve more generally the status and reputation of women fish harvesters and by helping to address their training needs and other aspects of occupational health and safety. Institutional recognition and support for women's varying work patterns, which are different than men's, are also important.

3.3.1 Women's Entry into Fishing: Strategies and Negotiations

During the 1980s and 1990s, the economic, social and environmental restructuring that affected fishing households in rural Newfoundland and Labrador created a particular context that shaped the choices available to women in fishing households. In the early 1980s, women made up 8% of fish harvesters, but by 2000, they made up 20% of fish harvesters in the province. Some women felt they had little choice but to go fishing with their husbands. One woman, in describing her presence on the boat as an effect of the changes in the fishery over the past decade on the incomes in inshore fishing households, said simply, "It's putting me out there" (02-07-07). Another woman described the situation in the following way: "There's no doubt it's a man's world and we were forced in there big time – but right in there, sink or swim" (01-04-04). Why did this woman feel women fish harvesters have to "sink or swim" and how, in her view, did they come to be in such a position? What may be some of the effects on women's health resulting from their unprecedented entry into fish harvesting at a time when provincial and federal governments were promoting policies and programs to downsize the industry, restrict entry, and buy back licenses?

Given that most women in this study felt they were left with little choice in the matter, a question about whose idea it was that they go fishing seems somewhat trivial in hindsight. Nonetheless, women's responses to the question did help me understand the constraints and opportunities they faced, the sacrifices they had made, and the strategies and arguments they used at the household level in relation to their work. Their responses

also illustrate, to varying degrees, the amount of support and investment that they could expect in their work as fish harvesters from those closest to them.

When I asked the women, "why they went fishing and who's idea it was," eleven women said it was their idea. They went fishing mainly to secure the household income, so that the income from the fishing enterprise would stay in the household. Due to a multitude of financial constraints, many of these families felt they could no longer support other households. By going fishing with their husbands, they were able to keep the income in the household, whereas prior to this, the husband would have paid a man from outside the household to work with him. Another reason was that there were fewer options for them to do other types of paid work in their communities than in the past. Most women, especially those who had young children at home, also felt they needed some flexibility with paid work so they could combine it with meeting their children's needs and managing their household responsibilities. While this was difficult to do while fishing, fishing did give them more flexibility at other times during the year than they had in previous jobs. One woman, whose children were grown and moved away, said she fished so she could spend more time with her husband.

Some of the women had to convince their husbands to let them go to work aboard the boat because their husbands had some trepidation about them going fishing. Some felt they would be too fearful, that they might get sick and not be able to handle the work, or that they would want to come ashore. Other husbands were concerned that they would not be able to get along with each other on the water. One woman who entered fish

harvesting during the downturn had the following to say:

It was actually my idea. After four kids and the cost of everything getting more expensive, there was nothing here job wise. I couldn't get anything. So I said, "Maybe I should try the fishing." My husband didn't mind my being there: it was just that he was afraid we'd get out there and start arguing. So I said, "Well, we got to try it" (01-02-03).

Another woman also talked about having to convince her husband to let her go fishing with him:

At first he wasn't that fond of it but he grew warm to the idea over the winter. When I was at the plant I put it to him that year, but he wanted me to wait for awhile so I waited till the next spring. All over the winter I was sort of buttering him up (01-05-02).

Like women in many other male-dominated occupations, some of these women were influenced to become fish harvesters by seeing other women working as fish harvesters. Many of the younger women had been aware of women in and around their communities who had been fishing for a long time. One woman in this study described her memories of these women and their capabilities:

There's a couple of women that have been in it longer than me and not only have they been fishing, but they used to help make trawl gear. I can always remember as a young girl people talking about women that help their husbands with their work in the fishery, helping build lobster pots and paint buoys. They would say, "Yes, that woman is almost as good as her husband." They've been in it for a long time ... I'm only young compared to how long they've been in it (01-01-06).

One effect of seeing other women doing this work was that when the ground fish declined, some of them really did not think it was such a big move to go aboard the boats to help their husbands and to bring extra money into the household.

The fish started to get less and less and less, so I said, "perhaps I should go fishing." I saw another woman doing it and I thought it might be doable. It was extra money coming into her house. It was my idea to go fishing – I saw another woman doing it (01-04-03).

Women described using the fact that other women had been fishing to negotiate a position aboard the boats. They used both equality issues and group identity claims to persuade their husbands that they could do the work. They claimed that if other women could do it, then so could they. One woman said: "Well, he needed somebody to help him so I said, "Why can't I go out? Women fishes today, so why can't I go out?" He said, "If you want to come out then you can" (02-01-02).

Regardless of when the women went fishing – and some went fishing before the downturn, others after – attempts to secure the household income seem to have been the most important factor drawing women into the fishery. Often, both husband and wife were surprised to find that working together on the water worked well for them as individuals and as a fishing household. One woman who had been fishing for twenty years explained the many reasons why she went fishing:

I: How did you come to be doing this kind of work? Whose idea was it?

FH: It was nobody's idea really. It's just that where my husband was a fisherman, this is really a small community and there's really no other kind of work, so if you wanted to work, you more or less had to fish. There was no other kind of work so I guess that's why I got into the fishing. Once I got into it, it worked out for us. We both worked together and our income was bigger which meant a better living for us. So it worked out well so I stuck with it.

I: Do you ever remember saying to him that you wanted to go out fishing in the boat with him?

FH: No, what we figure – I guess he was thinking of getting somebody to help him because it was getting too much for him to be fishing alone because he was getting involved in more things in the fishery so I was sitting one day and I said, “Probably I should try it and see how it’s going to work out because if you get someone to fish with you then that’s part of our income gone. If I go fishing and it works out good, well probably it would work out fine.” And it did.

I: Do you remember what his first reaction was?

FH: Yes. Well to tell you the truth I was scared to go out in the boat and he didn’t think I was going to stick with it but actually I did.

I: Were other women going out in the boats at this time?

FH: The year I started there was a few other women who started too. So I guess in a way that gave me incentive to go as well (02-03-01).

Women who entered before the downturn were able to gradually learn fishing skills and were therefore somewhat more knowledgeable, and better prepared for the often harsh and difficult work involved in fishing than women who entered rather suddenly during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Women who entered prior to the crisis spoke about doing hands-on fishery work even at an early age: “My dad was a fisherman and he used to take us salmon and lobster fishing. We used to help him as kids when we were nine or ten years old” (02-04-02). Another woman explained that she had really been learning about fishing long before she went on the water. “I never got in the boat green. I spent a lot of time on the beach helping my husband. While rearing the kids I helped my husband with his fishing. Some days we’d be at the fishing until 11:00 at night trying to fix something on the motor and I’d be right there with him” (02-03-13). By the time she went on the water full-time, she had already learned a lot of fishery-related skills.

Five women said it was their husband's idea that they go fishing. While this was not a problem for most women, in one case, it was evident that the husband controlled the woman's decisions concerning fishing and that she lacked a say in the matter. In the following exchange, we can see how both the husband and wife strategically used gendered discourse about women's role in the workforce to support their point of view. During the interview, the husband arrived home just as the woman was telling me that, after fishing for eleven years, her health had deteriorated and she wanted to leave fishing altogether. He responded, "You're staying on the boat as long as I do." Desperately trying to convince him, she drew on dominant traditional discourse about women saying: "Fishing is no place for a woman! A woman can't do the same work as a man." Then her husband turned to me and said: "Women can work on fishing boats, can't they?" I explained my position – that women should be able to make decisions freely about work and that it seemed like his wife was saying that she was not feeling physically able to do the work any longer and wanted to leave the fishery. Shortly thereafter, he left the house. The strategic use of gendered discourse in this exchange is very interesting. She used traditional discourses about women in her attempt to protect her health and change her place of employment by arguing that women should not be on boats. He used more recent equality discourse to pressure her into staying in the fishery by arguing that women could do the work and, therefore, she should stay. More importantly though, this case illustrates this woman's lack of autonomy. Her attempts to withdraw from what, for her, is a risky work environment and to protect her health and well-being have gone unheeded.

In another interview, a woman positioned herself at a distance from the initial idea that she go fishing. She said she, “never thought about it” until her husband said, “go for it.” She also told me that she was not prepared, at least initially, for what she encountered in her work as a fish harvester.

I don't know if I even thought about it to tell you the truth. It came up but I'm a spur of the moment person. When something comes up, I go for it – if he says go for it, I go for it, that sort of thing. I didn't think anything about it until the day I went to set my traps in the middle of a snowstorm in April and I just about froze to death (02-05-01).

Not surprisingly, most of the women who said their husbands made the decision that they go to work as fish harvesters also said they would leave fishing for a job on land. Most of those who initiated the move themselves were more content to stay.

3.3.2 Women's Identity as Fish Harvesters

How do women describe their role in the fishery and to what degree is gender a factor in their work experiences? To answer this question, I began by asking: “What do you call yourself, in terms of your work in the fishery?” Six women said they call themselves ‘fisherperson,’ three others use the term ‘fish harvester,’ two women, both core harvesters, call themselves ‘fisherwoman,’ and two women said they call themselves ‘fisherman.’ One woman calls herself a ‘helper,’ another calls herself a ‘fisher’ and yet another said ‘fisher lady.’

The variety of terms they use indicates that women's place in the fishery is neither certain nor self-evident. This variety also suggests that their position is in flux. The terms

women use to describe themselves also provide a glimpse of the many ways they are positioned in fisheries discourse as both women and as workers in the inshore fishery – they could be male as in ‘fisherman,’ gender-neutral as in ‘fisherperson,’ female as in ‘fisherwoman,’ professionals as in ‘fish harvester’ or subservient as in ‘helper.’ Chris Weedon says that by analyzing discourse, understood as a structuring principle within social institutions, modes of thought and individual subjectivity, feminist post-structuralism is able to show the workings of power and resistance.

Language is not transparent as in humanist discourse, it is not expressive and does not label a ‘real’ world. Meanings do not exist prior to their articulation in language and language is not an abstract system, but is always socially and historically located in discourses. Discourses represent political interests and in consequence are constantly vying for status and power. The site of this battle for power is the subjectivity of the individual and it is a battle in which the individual is an active but not sovereign protagonist (1987, 41).

Women’s use of certain terms to describe themselves is connected to their assessment of their position in the fishery, their relations with fisheries institutions, their learning, and therefore, whether or not they have the *right* to call themselves ‘fish harvester’ or ‘fisherman.’ The three women who called themselves ‘fish harvesters’ were the most aware of and involved with professionalization and, therefore, more comfortable using the term.

Use of terms such as ‘fisherwoman’ resists dominant discourses about women and the work they do in the fishery. However, both resistance and complicity need to be understood as aspects of agency with underlying links to desire, identification, and fear.

Here, women's use of the terms 'helper' and 'fisherman' are particularly insightful in that they articulate both women's complicity with patriarchal norms, and constraints on their opportunities.

Women's narratives reveal a struggle to find the language that best describes themselves, their place, and the work they do in the fishery. One woman alluded to an element of 'common sense' in language traditionally used in the fishery when she said: "Most of the time I call myself a fisherman because it's just so normal, right? A fisherperson is what I try to say now" (02-05-01). In the following excerpt, a different woman provides further insight into these women's struggle with what to call themselves. Her narrative reflects the larger debate going on between language and gender identity.

I calls myself a fisherman because I works just as hard as any man. I mean now I don't go saying, "Well, I'm a fisherman," but if someone asked me I says, "I'm a fisherman." I don't think – I just says it because you're fishing out there so they calls you a fisherman. They treats you like a man because they don't even think, "there's a woman there – I'd better watch my tongue." They don't believe in that, right? If you're a fisherman you puts up with what you get, so we call ourselves fishermen. Some women are a little bit dinky – they'll call themselves fishers or fisherpersons. I was called that for two years – I would say I'm a fisherperson. Usually now when people ask me what I do, I say, "I fish for a living" (02-08-01).

This woman's narrative also describes the struggle many women experience when they go to work in male-dominated occupations where they are watched and their work is visibly scrutinized simply because they are women. To help cope, women sometimes adopt strategies that help them survive as a woman in a male environment. As is evident in the above excerpt, one common strategy is to downplay the fact that they are women

and to identify with males. Women's survival in a male dominated occupation often requires that they give up some aspects of their femininity.

This woman calls herself a 'fisherman' because she works, 'just as hard as any man.' She articulates aspects of popular discourse about women's needs in the fishery and clearly feels that they should not draw attention to themselves as women or receive any special treatment including different titles. She says she does not want nor expect special treatment such as men watching their language or people using 'dinky' language. Her adoption of a male position helps her fit in and survive in the fishing industry, and provides some benefits, such as the status that comes from doing men's work, "just as hard as any man."

Such status, based on a male identity, often has limitations, however, when it comes to women. As Henrietta Moore says, "the experience of being a woman ... can never be a singular one, and will always be dependent upon a multiplicity of locations and positions that are constructed socially" (1994, 3). Regardless of women's capabilities or desires, institutional biases related to gender position women as subordinate, reminding them that they are different and while they may have the same rights as men, their *needs* are open to interpretation by powerful (male) interests.

Theresa de Lauretis argues that identity is not fixed. Rather, it is constructed within a system of difference (1993, 74). One place where gender difference is most obvious is in the gender division of labour which defines occupations based on gender. While this is being challenged on many fronts, certain occupations and certain positions

within occupations are still seen as suitable solely for men and others are seen as suitable solely for women. These dominant, binary definitions of gender and sex are 'naturalized' in dominant discourses and have the effect of keeping women in subordinate positions in the workforce.

Although they used a variety of titles to describe their roles, in many women's narratives, their main conception of themselves as fish harvesters was as 'helper.' They *help* their husbands who are the skippers, holders of fishing knowledge, teachers, and protectors. While these women are very proud of the work they do aboard fishing boats, for some of them, the limits on both their learning and their work opportunities help construct and reinforce their identity as 'helpers.' This may be very problematic for their future in the fishery.

For some women, this institutionalized lack of place for women harvesters and the persistence of people's perception of fishery workers as 'male' is frustrating. In the following excerpt, one woman explains that dominant thinking that fisherpersons are men (and not women) doesn't seem to be changing even though the number of women harvesters continues to increase. Ideas such as these have kept women's work invisible.

When you think about a fisher person you automatically think of a man. You don't think of a woman and that attitude doesn't seem to be changing. Almost half of the people in fishing boats now are women but they're still not recognized as being part of the fishery. It would be nice to see that change (01-05-06).

Women and men take up various subject positions within social discourses. The positions available to women are restricted and defined through a process of

differentiation that is highly gendered. The dominant discourse in western society, as in most, reinforces male power and privilege. For a variety of reasons, mainly material in nature, women sometimes comply with this 'law' while at the same time, struggling to find ways to resist it. The woman in the following excerpt recognizes her own internal struggle with the devaluing of women's work aboard fishing boats and the significance of women adopting limited conceptions of themselves and their work:

I think about that sometimes because, in the beginning, I thought my work wasn't that important. I remember talking to another woman in the fishery and I asked her about her work. She said, "I don't do very much. I just measures the crab and she went on and on about the things she did." I said, "Without that being done ... that was important." But she figured that what she was doing wasn't as important as what the men are doing because they were men. Even me, even though I knows better and I'm out there and I sees the stuff and I'm into equality one hundred percent, deep down there's times I even think that. It's true and I don't know how we're going to get away from it. More and more I'm coming to realize it (01-04-11).

Another aspect of women's fishing relates to how they see each other as fish harvesters.

One woman who has been fishing for twenty years explained her concern about the women who have been entering the fishery in recent years. She said, "They are there in body but not in mind" (02-03-13). In the following excerpt, another woman made similar observations. She says that women are going to work on fishing boats mainly for financial reasons and they will have to adjust to the "good times and bad times." While she enjoys the work and has become comfortable with fishing, she feels that other women who are just coming into fishing mainly for financial reasons, are not enjoying being there.

FH: They're doing it for financial reasons because if a husband and wife can go fishing in a small boat, especially if it's lobster, it's a good living. Then they can go

at the crab and codfish. It's a lot easier to bring money into your own household than it is to try and keep two families going and paying someone else out of it. Sometimes you have your good days and sometimes you have bad days. I think really why the women are fishing with their husbands has to do with finances, mostly anyway. Some of them enjoy it, like I don't mind it. I'm not going to deny that it's not good money but if I miss a day lobster fishing it seems like there's something I haven't done. ... I think, as for the other women, I think it's financial and there's good times and bad times.

I: Do you think at some level other women really do enjoy the work?

FH: No, no, no. I've seen women when they come into the plant to off-load their lobsters. It's hard to describe – they're like this with their rubber gear on (she hunches over and tucks her head into her chest), can't wait to get home sort of thing. I've felt like that at times, especially if it's a miserable day and sort of rough. Sometimes your heart is up in your throat when you're out there fishing. You're thinking, "I'll try and get home, I'll try and get home ... and you're looking at the time, another half hour – I'll try and get home." ... I've seen women come in and I know how they feels cause I've been sick a lot of days out there. It's OK when everything is smooth and right now I don't mind because I'm sort of used to it. But on the first of it, when there would be a lazy swell on the water and if it's raining there's no more uncomfortable place in the world to be than in the open boat with no shelter. It's very, very uncomfortable. When I sees the ladies going out, I know how they feel. I've been at it for ten years and there's a lot just getting into it and I know how they feels. It's a good life (01-01-06).

3.3.3 A Typical Workday During the Fishing Season

Women were asked to describe a typical workday at the start of the season. Most are up and about by 4:00 am and on the water by 5:00 am. The distance they go out on the water varies somewhat depending on the size of the boat and the species fished. The four women who worked on 34'11" boats went out from eight to twenty-three miles. Twelve women fish from smaller, open boats and went out from a few miles to fifteen miles, but one woman regularly went out 23 miles. Of the twelve open boats, four had

one motor and eight had two motors.

The season opens with lobster, then they usually move on to lumpfish, cod and then crab. For those who have cod licenses, later in the summer and fall they try to go back fishing cod again but the weather often does not cooperate. Sometimes the men with small boats and dories buddy up with other fishermen who have bigger boats. Women usually do not participate in these situations because of limits on the number of crew members.

Due to the distances to the fishing grounds, four of the women interviewed spend most of their time during the fishing season away from their communities. They stay in a small cabin with their husband and come home for one or two days on the weekend. Being away from home for extended periods of time causes additional worry and stress, especially for the women who have young children at home. In these cases, the women make arrangements with people close to them – usually relatives – who they can depend on, such as sisters, mothers, members of their extended family, or neighbours who live nearby to help take care of the children. These people are paid for doing this work.

Assuming a six day fishing week (weather permitting), which is common with all but two women in the study, the women spend an average of sixty-three hours a week on the water. Each day, when their work on the water is done, all but two women have a second job tending to onshore crew duties which also have to be done every day they are on the water. Fourteen women spend an average of fifteen hours a week doing this ground crew work at the wharf and around their communities when they come ashore in

the afternoon. These duties involve offloading fish, purchasing and gathering supplies and equipment, cleaning the boat, preparing bait, baiting nets at the wharf, and interacting with buyers and occasionally representatives of fishery organizations. In addition, all the women said they spend a couple of hours each week in their homes doing other work for the fishing enterprise such as keeping financial records, paying fees, ensuring they are up to date on safety requirements, filing income tax, and taking care of other incidental paperwork. In total, fourteen women said they do a total of eighty hours of fishery work a week and two others do an average of sixty-five hours.

The workday does not end when they are done their work for the fishing enterprise. All the women leave their fishery work and go home to a third job – taking care of the home and children. They prepare supper, clean up, do laundry, attend to the children's needs, and prepare food for lunches the following day. Most women said that this work takes them a minimum of three hours a day, which adds 21 hours a week to their total workload.

At present, in addition to fishing and taking care of children and the home, ten women said they do unpaid work in their communities such as taking care of elderly relatives, volunteering with non-profit organizations and the fisheries union. Two women do volunteer work with fisheries organizations. Seven women provide some level of care for elderly relatives and/or friends outside their homes and, while this work often takes up a moderate amount of their time, most women said they did not find it difficult. Four women said this work was very time consuming and two said they found it stressful. One

woman said she spends about sixteen hours a week doing caretaking, even during the fishing season. Overall, nine women said they have decreased the amount of unpaid work they do since they started fishing. Four women said the amount of unpaid work has increased. For three, the amount of unpaid work they do has stayed the same.

When asked about the sharing of work around the home, most women said the work is shared, to varying degrees, between themselves and their husbands. Some women said that their children helped out with certain tasks. Five women said they share everything between themselves and their husbands, including the cooking and cleaning. Eight others said that the work is segregated – women worked mainly inside the home and men worked outside, although in at least two of these cases, women also did some outside work. Other women described doing shared work during the day, but at night, “I help the children with their schoolwork while my husband attends fishery meetings” (01-01). Another woman said, “I cook and clean while he baits gear on the wharf with the other men” (01-02). Three women said they do all the work around the home. One woman talked about doing carpentry, chimney cleaning, electrical and painting in her home. Another woman said, “He does dishes about twice a year. He does nothing around here. He won’t even mow the lawn” (01-03).

Ten women had a total of 19 children at home at the time they were interviewed. Fourteen were girls and five were boys. Their ages ranged from six to twenty-three and the average age was thirteen. All the children were in school except for one boy who had quit school and two girls who had recently quit college and returned home.

All but two women combine their work in the fishery with raising children. At the time of the interviews ten women had nineteen children at home. Other women had children who were grown and had moved away since they began fishing. In order to get the children ready and off to school, women sometimes adjusted the times they went on the water. The husband would go out at 4:30 a.m, and come in for breakfast at 8:00. When the children were sent off to school, the two of them would go fishing together until the afternoon. Once the children were a little older and more mature, the women would reset the alarm, lay out their breakfast and lunch, and go fishing with their husbands at 4:30 a.m.

3.3.4 Job Satisfaction

Although many women had concerns about their work as fish harvesters, most of them said that overall, they liked it. Some talked positively about how it felt to be learning new things, improvements in their physical and emotional health, the flexibility it gave them to be with their families, as well as the additional income it brought into the household. Others talked about their wife-husband relationship and how it had grown since they started fishing together.

I was interested in knowing about women's level of comfort with their work on the water. Some women said they felt comfortable after only one year on the water while others said it took them five years or longer before they felt comfortable. Women also talked about whether or not they feel comfortable talking about their work in the fishery.

I asked them, "Do you talk about your paid work at home?" Fourteen women said yes and two said no. When I asked them how difficult it was for them to talk about their paid work at home, eleven said it was very easy to talk about their work, four said somewhat easy, and one said it was hard to talk about her work at home.

While most women said they enjoyed their work, their expression of this enjoyment was always qualified by the increasing pressures on small inshore fishing enterprises brought on by restructuring, in particular the stress of uncertainty in the industry, poor catches, dealing with bad weather, and the concern about their role as mothers and their obligations to the children at home. When one woman told me she liked fishing on "good days," I asked her to explain what she meant by 'a good day.'

FH: I don't know. We didn't get any this year.

I: Do you mean good catch days?

FH: Yeah, when everything is working OK. But you gets out there hauling nets and I got myself tore up and there's no fish in them. Then something else gives out and it goes on and on. It's discouraging some times. That's a bad day.

On a good day, you goes out there and there's fish on the go and everything is going OK. That's a good day. What I dislike about the work is that it's long work and it's hard work for sometimes not very much pay. It's long and tiresome. You got to start early in the mornings – you got to start at daybreak. When you goes out and you're making a living, but when you're going out day after day for nothing, that's sad. In the summer months we have a lot of those days. The lump fishery is cut back to three weeks. That's nothing. It used to be seven weeks and now it's cut back to three (02-07-02).

To better understand women's level of satisfaction with their work as fish harvesters, I asked them to tell me about their likes and dislikes about their work on

fishing boats. Some women *are* fishing primarily for the income, but there is nothing new or particularly interesting about that – most people work for financial reasons. Other factors, such as being able to provide for their families, community and institutional attitudes towards their work in the fishery, having the opportunity and the freedom to fish enough to make a decent living, and supports at work and at home, were the main determinants of whether or not women enjoyed fishing. While these women all live in fishing families, for most of the women who went fishing with the downturn, working for pay as a fish harvester simply never entered their minds until the decline in groundfish. As noted above, most of them had worked in occupations that were traditional for women, although some were fishery related.

Women's feelings about their work must also be seen in the context of their previous gender and class experiences with education and work. While they feel good about being able to earn an income and provide for their families, some women clearly do not feel that working as a fish harvester is something that one would proudly aspire towards as a career. One woman stressed the need for family and social supports in order to aspire to other types of work. After fishing for ten years, she says, regretfully: "I'd like to have my time back and know what I know now." She is "still in shock" that she is working on the water.

I never gave any thought to what women should be doing because I never thought I would be in a boat. I'm still in shock. At times I say to myself, "Oh God what a waste." I've said to my kids that I'd like to have my time back and know what I know now. Everyone in my school would be looking at me and saying, "What a whiz kid." I would be at the top. I

would be at the top. I would go to university.

I came from a big family but I didn't have the encouragement or the help in school. I never got it from my parents like I give it to my kids. I always say, "If I was encouraged more, and praised more." With my kids I got a rule: 'anything below an 80 I don't want to see it' because they know I'm going to get mad because I know what they're capable of. I find I got to give them that push. If I give up on them, they're finished. I know because I was (01-02-14).

Women's job satisfaction also depends on their current health status. Work-related injuries influence women's feelings about whether or not they like fish harvesting because, in some cases, they are no longer able to do the work. One woman who had been injured aboard the boat and did not have adequate support said coldly, "I don't look at it as a job. It's a source of income" (01-03-02). Some women whose health had deteriorated while working in the fishery were reluctant to admit they liked anything about the work:

FH: I can't think of anything I like. I like the pay. That's all I like about it.

I: Do you like working outdoors?

FH: Yes, when the weather is warmer I enjoy it. I look forward to getting up and going. But when you're getting up and it's minus ten or minus fifteen degrees outside, and your feet and hands are froze in the boat, I don't look forward to that by no means. I don't know if I can take it much more because I'm getting too many physical problems with arthritis and stuff like that. I don't think I could take it much more really. But it depends. You don't know from year to year. You have to wait and see what the year will bring – it could be a warm and lovely spring (02-02-02).

Some women's narratives sway back and forth between liking and not liking the work. One possible explanation for this is that, on an ideological level, they cannot be

seen to be enjoying this work. This relates to women having primary responsibility for the family and in rural Newfoundland and Labrador communities, women must be seen to be putting the family first, and any desires they may have in terms of their own fulfillment second.

The role of mother is very powerful both ideologically and emotionally. In the following excerpt, one woman quotes her son who said, "Mom is not out there doing this [fishing] for herself. She's out there doing this for us." Because of her primary role as mother, and not being there in the mornings to take care of her children, this woman sways back and forth in her feelings about fishing. There are obviously things about fishing that she has come to enjoy and, over time, her feelings about being on the water and not being there for her children in the mornings have changed. This is partly related to her realization that her children have learned some independence and she has relaxed about them being at home alone.

Well, [fishing] is not something that I want to be at, but I love it. Well, it's not that I love it. I got to do it. It's not as much of a burden right now as it used to be. It was bothersome to me back when I started, but I guess I was younger then. Now it seems like it's made my kids more responsible.

My oldest [at home] is fourteen and when he leaves the house he makes sure the other kids have their shoes tied, their jackets on, and clean clothes on that they laid out the night before. I heard him the other day telling my youngest son to take off the top he had spilled chocolate on. They're good, they work with each other, and they help one another and that's changed a lot. In that sense it has made me feel better about them because I know that I can trust them a lot more than I normally would. It was even better when my oldest son was home because he was very responsible. I think he instilled a lot in them, right? I know he used to say, "Mom is not out there doing this for herself. She's out there doing this for us so

everybody pull your weight and everyone work together and we'll get through this." (01-02-04)

Other women talked about how fishing made them feel they were doing something good for their families and contributing in a positive way. For example, fishing allowed them to put high protein food away for the winter:

I used to come in and I'd salt a lot for meals for the winter. It's great because it cuts down on our groceries. The kids won't eat it – not all the time but they like some fish. We love it. When you get out there and you get all these extra meals, I say, "this is great. I'm doing something good." You don't mind. You feel good about yourself and the good pans out the bad. (01-02-07)

3.3.5 Work Dynamics Between Women and Their Husbands

Many women described, in some detail, working out a 'system' aboard the boat so that the work they do complements the work their husband does, thereby helping complete the work efficiently and safely. In the following excerpt, the woman says this is important work that women do, and she describes how men have come to depend on women's abilities to keep things going smoothly aboard the boat.

It's like when we're lobster fishing, we do things differently as women with the lobster. We know that. It's like we have a system: there's things that I do and there's things my husband does. He's in complete control of the engines and whatever, and I stand really close to him and I got a system and everything is down pat. When he is ready for things, things are there right away. He knows where to reach and find things. ... You work out a system of working together. Even the water under his feet gets scooped out and cleaned up because women normally pay attention to that kind of stuff. ... My husband gets used to things done the way I've been doing them. Everything is cleaned up – I keeps the bucket down by my feet where all the old bait goes. I know beforehand what he's going to ask for

so the bait tubs are ready and I slices half the herring. I know exactly what he's going to do so if we get a day where someone else goes, like one day when my son went, [my husband] has a lot of difficulty. We work well together and the work is done. I asked my son how things went and I found out that [my husband] would give him a hard time because he couldn't keep up with him. [My husband] would say, "All day aboard the boat and he didn't even clean up. What a state the boat was in." So even things like that – I guess that's our mind set, that we keep things clean and orderly and that day I didn't go was completely disorganized because I wasn't there (01-04-11).

The gender division of labour aboard fishing boats reflects the traditional gender division of labour in the home. Women rarely act as skippers, navigating or doing engine maintenance, although they sometimes operate the hydraulic equipment that brings the nets and pots aboard the boat. In general, their work tends to be very labour intensive. They act mainly in a helper capacity, doing most of the fast-paced, fish-processing work such as sorting, cutting, and icing. They also take care of bait and set traps and nets and keep the boat clean. In contrast (and at least publicly), the men are in control of the boat, as they are in control of the fishing enterprise. It is important that they be *seen* to be in control. They navigate the boat and often operate the hydraulics. They also do maintenance on the motor and hydraulics when required. Some women mentioned that lobster pots are repaired by both men and women aboard the boat. In the following excerpt, a woman compares her work to her husband's and shows the labour intensive nature of her work:

I: Can you tell me what you do aboard the boat?

FH: What I don't do you mean. When we're hauling crab pots I'm on the hauler. He hauls in the crab pots and he takes out the crab because he finds it too heavy.

Then he switches over and handles the motor and I throw out the crab pots. I just picks them up and throws them out.

I: So he finds that too heavy?

FH: No, he finds it too heavy for me when it's full of crab. It's all right if there's nothing in it, but if it's really full it's really heavy and it's awkward to handle. It's not heavy, it's awkward to handle because it's so round, right? Once it's done I sets the bait and throws out the pots. It's only easy. That's one of the fisheries that's nice. It's clean. I like it. It's fast and quick money. It's just that I find the trip up and the trip back long.

I: How far out to you go?

FH: Last year we went out ten miles and it takes us about twenty minutes if it's calm, that's to our first pots. Then by the time we goes at the first pots until we get up to the last ones it usually takes us forty-five minutes and if it's rough it takes us an hour. We got to go through all that – we haul them in five pots at a time because it's easier for me and when we does that we go to the next ones – in groups of five or six. That's easy. We had eight on one year. Oh my God – very hard. It's hard to get them out of the water – I got to help him bring them in see but when there's five it's excellent, just nice. I could do it almost myself.

I: So you're on the hauler for the crab but you switch around when you're bringing in the lobster and he gets on the hauler?

FH: Yes, I measures the lobsters and look for V notches and spawn and I band them and put them in the crate. Then I bait the trap and throw it back out. He just hauls it in. Then we go on to the next ones.

I: And you also do lumpfish?

FH: Yes we do that by nets but we got a net hauler. This past three years we've been using hydraulics so it's so much simpler for a woman. You only got to take the slack. The lumpfish is alright, black things, the ugliest fish you ever seen. The red ones (males) hook into your net pretty bad. Sometimes it winds up your net and you got to try and get it undone. That's hard. So I cut open the fish and take out the roe. He's down on one end on the hauler and "m on the other end – it's my job to hook the little buggers out. I have to make sure we don't lose them because one minute they're there and the next minute they're gone, they're tricky. Sometimes they're really big and heavy.

I: And do you also do cod?

FH: Yes, my husband hauls the trawl and I got to cut the fish's throat right away. I got to bleed the fish, wash it, put it in pails, ice it down and start all over. Cod is a very long job. That's the worst about fishing is the cod. You got to make sure everything is clean because we're on a grading system so it's really hard because you got to have so much ice on it, you can't leave it out in the sun. You got to make sure you cut the throat right away because it has to bleed. If you leave them there too long they're going to go soft. It's certainly a lot of work especially if they are big, right? I does all that. He just hauls the trawl and drives the boat. I tell you, my son, I'm a nigger head. Have you ever heard tell of the little nigger heads? That's what I call myself sometimes.

I: No, what is that?

FH: Well, before we used to use what they called a little nigger head to haul up the traps, right? That's what we had before we got the hydraulics. They calls it a nigger head because it does all the work. Now the hydraulics does most of it – it's a beautiful system my dear but I does all the cutting and icing. But last year was wicked – 1,000 pounds of fish cleaned and I did all that (02-08-02).

When she was telling me about the way they handle the crab pots, I wasn't sure what she meant by her husband finding the work too heavy. It turns out that her husband was judging the relative strength required for different aspects of the job, to assess whether or not she should do it. He makes the decisions concerning the work she does and if he decides bringing in the crab pots is too heavy for her, then she will be discouraged from doing it. She goes on to say that it is not really too heavy, just awkward, and that she has to help *him* with it.

Placing such constraints on the work women do may be problematic because sometimes women need to be given the opportunity to adjust to work that is awkward for them initially. This is especially true of women when they do work they have not

traditionally done. Denying women the opportunity to adjust to the work or to adjust their work space to their specific requirements may impose unnecessary restrictions on women. It is well documented that women in male dominated occupations find different and sometimes creative ways of handling awkward materials and awkward work environments. As Karen Messing reminds us, "When men are considered to be the "normal" occupants of a workplace, women are discouraged from adapting the environment in ways most suitable to them" (1998, 24). Imposing constraints based solely on gender norms about what women can and cannot do, is often a proxy for male control. Without adequate opportunities to adjust to different types of work, women risk musculoskeletal problems (Messing, 1991, 89-91).

The tendency of the woman in the above excerpt to downplay the work she does was a common theme found in many of the women's narratives. At first she describes her role by saying, "I just picks [the crab pots] up and throws them out." However, as she tells me more, she begins to realize the amount of work that she actually does aboard the boat compared to her husband and speaks about herself as a more competent worker who, in fact, does much of the work aboard the boat. She says, "I does all that. He just hauls the trawl and drives the boat." She then draws on a racist phrase and compares herself to a 'nigger head,' (a small winch that is used to haul nets aboard the boat) to further illustrate the extent of the imbalance in workload aboard the boat: "I tell you, my son, I'm a nigger head." As a woman worker who cleaned 1,000 pounds of cod last summer, she senses the connection between her working conditions and the segregation of black

workers in low-paying, repetitive and labour intensive jobs.

Other expressions directly target women's work in a derogatory way. One woman repeated what she heard people say about working with crab – that it is easy to catch and because of this, it is equated with women's work. "As for crab, a lot of people say that's a woman's job. Just women's work – the crab. You just go out and you pull the string on the bottom of the pot, dump the crab and pack them away in the locker" (01-02-03).

For many couples, working together seven days a week may be a bit stressful at times and a small fishing boat is quite a dangerous work environment if a husband and wife are not able to get along well. Most women stressed the importance of cooperation. As one woman said, "If you're in a boat fishing, the two of you got to get along. It's in between life and death" (02-08-05). Another woman explained, "Having a good job in the fishing boat comes right down to whether you got a good relationship at home, basically. If you're blessed to have that, it's a little different than if you're not" (01-04-04).

Many women in this study said that the combination of hard work and cooperation between husband and wife is very important. In some cases they said their relationship has grown stronger since they began fishing together. During the interview I asked them, "When you're worried, upset or under stress, how many people can you count on to really understand how you are feeling?" Fifteen women said one or more people and six of them identified their husbands as one of their main confidants. One woman, who has what she calls a great working relationship with her husband aboard the boat, explained the work dynamic between herself and her husband this way:

You got to like your husband and you got to put up with him. Like we try not to get on each other's nerves because you haven't got time, because you know he depends on you and you depends on him. It's nice. It brings you closer because there's nothing you don't know that he don't know. It brings you closer because you're out there for hours and hours hauling gear and you don't shut up. I mean every little darkest secret you never ever told him before, he knows it before you get ashore. So that's good. We're best friends. We were friends before we got married. Now we're, what's the word, inseparable, I think that's what they calls it, now.

You don't realize how much you depend on each other and you're just proud of each other because I could do my work and he'd have to get someone to help him. That's half our livelihood gone. See I'm taking up what he would pay somebody else and I can't see [another man] doing it where I could do it. I'm not proud to say, "Well I can't do this." He'll do it and he's not going to say, "You can't do that." He's not like that. He says, "If it's too heavy, let me know" and he even showed me how to do the traps and that I got to bend my knees and how I got to do everything or else, he says, "You're going to have pain." So he shows me and you got to learn, right? It's great. In the winter we're doing trawls together, we're making new traps together. Everything is together. So now he says, "I can't go on the skidoo, you're going to Bingo." So he's at the stage where he won't go if I don't go. It does that to you (02-08-05).

While many women talked about the good working relationships they have with their husbands, there are aspects of their relationships that show ways that men, whether consciously or unconsciously, attempt to maintain their dominance in the fishery and in the household. As we have already seen, one way they do this is by segregating the work done aboard the boat. Women do repetitive and intensive work – typical of many women's work throughout the world. They cut, clean and ice fish and cut bait, using skills many of them learned in fish plants. In the following excerpt, we see another example of control over women's work. This relates to myths about what women should and should not be doing when they are menstruating. One woman described the

restrictions her husband places on her work aboard the boat when she is on her period.

FH: Last year I was lucky a couple of times – it was blowing. By the time I went on the water I was alright and he don't let me stay. I'm allowed on the water and I might be able to bait a trap or something like that but I'm not allowed to touch nothing. If he got to check a load of traps and I'm on the time of the month and I goes out with him, I don't touch the traps. He jumps back and forth from one end to the other.

I: Why is that?

FH: Because he don't want me to strain when I'm on my period. I sits there, I cuts the bait, I might throw a little bit of ice on it, little odd jobs. He do not let me strain and if I strains he'll get mad because he don't want me to do it.

I: But there's no real logic behind that.

FH: No, stupid, eh? He figures I'm going to hurt myself. I don't know why. I says "It's normal. I have it all the time. I does my house work. What's the difference?" He says, "No, it's too hard on you." He figures it's a strain on my stomach and that might make me bleed harder. That's the way he works. He just don't want anything fishing to hurt me and he'll do it himself. I says, "I can do it." But he says, "No no, and you stay there. Cut this up for bait." Or he'll give me odd jobs to do. Think I don't know, hey? I says, "Well, what have you got me out here for?" He'll say, "I needs someone to cut up the bait. Someone got to band the lobsters and check for v notches and spawn. That's all important."

I: Do you ever not tell him that you're on your period?

FH: No, he knows all the time and he makes fun. And he knows when I'm off (02-08-12).

This woman is not really bothered by his actions and does not see them as derogatory. She challenges him, but mostly she understands him to be acting out of concern for her, although she recognizes that he is somewhat unreasonable. Women on fishing boats choose their battles carefully.

As a feminist researcher, I analyze his actions as an example of patriarchal control that men have historically exerted over women in the name of 'protection.' These actions are often rooted in myths that have been used to establish difference and keep women out of certain types of work environments, such as the marine industries, mining, trades and engineering. Difference is a relational concept: here her assumed frailness due to menstruating is contrasted with his male strength and control. Restricting her duties reinforces differences based on gender.

As women have been entering male-dominated occupational areas more and more, men attempt to assert their dominance through the use of myths to restrict women's activities within those industries. In the above case, having her in the boat but not allowed to work may in fact be more damaging to her health because as other women fish harvesters have explained, working steadily while on the water helps them stay warm.

A few women in the study talked about tensions that sometimes occur between husband and wife. Many of these women challenge their husbands on their risk-taking behaviours, especially in relation to staying out in bad weather. In the following excerpt, a woman recounts the debate between herself and her husband one 'blowy' morning. She felt that the weather was not suitable for fishing but he believes that taking risks with the weather is a part of fishing. He tells her that he wouldn't be much of a fisherman if he had to depend on her to make a living. Like other women, when the weather turns bad while they are on the water, she says her trust in her husband wavers and she relies more on God to bring her home safely:

FH: I said, "I don't think you should go." But he said, "Well gee, what am I going to do? I can't make a dollar sitting here on the beach. I can't make a dollar sitting home." I say, "Well one day is not going to make no difference because tomorrow might be better." Then he says, "Well tomorrow could be worse." That kind of brings on arguments sometimes but then I say, "You've been fishing. You know what it's about." But sometimes I disagree with him a lot.

I: Do you ever go out and get caught in the wind coming up and you got to get back in?

FH: Yes, and he drags it to the last minute. That's when I dies. I wants to go home but he always tells me, "I know what I'm doing." And I says, "So I'll have to put my trust in you and in God." I believes more in God since I went fishing. I know there's a God, that's for sure – he brings me home safe (02-010-05).

He told me we wouldn't make a cent. He told me he wouldn't be much of a fisherman if he had to depend on me because I'm nervous with the wind. I mean I'm used to it enough but he's been used to it since he was fourteen. He's been in a dory all his life and I haven't but he took me out in some pretty bad weather. He felt safe enough to go in it and now like I got enough confidence in him to believe that but then when we gets in a storm again, I starts losing my faith again. Then I think, "This will be my last trip." But he can handle the dory pretty good.

I: Did you ever get so scared on the water that you cried?

FH: Yes. When you're not used to going out in a dory or a boat. Well a boat is a completely different experience anyway. I mean if I was fishing in a 45 foot boat I wouldn't mind it at all. But in an open dory everything is coming at you and you think you're not going to make the next wave (02-10-04).

Tensions are also the result of different working styles, especially situations where women want a more egalitarian (non-hierarchical) working relationship. When I asked women if they considered their husband to be their boss, they all said 'no.' But when I asked them if their husbands tried to be their boss, many said 'yes.' Some women talked about husbands' demanding work habits that could become problematic. In the following excerpt, a woman describes her husband's unrealistic expectations of her while they are

working on the water. She does not like his intense work habits and she recognizes that they are not good for him either.

He tells me what to do and he expects me to do it. He knows I'm capable of doing it and he won't give me something that he knows I can't do, so when he tells me to do it, I just got to do it, right? He expects too much. Like when he tells me to do something, he says, "Do it now" and he knows I'm going to do it so I have to drop everything. I've been there sometimes and it makes me some mad.

Well God, I was out there one time for ten or eleven hours with nothing to eat or drink cause you're working – you're steady working my dear. You don't stop. One of the fishermen came up beside us this year and asked what we were having for dinner. I said "Nothing for dinner. No, you don't stop. He won't let me stop and have nothing." He said, "Gee, when you look at your watch and sees it's 10:00 you should shut everything down and have something to eat." But he don't stop for nothing. There's no such thing as a smoke time or lunch break or dinner hour or none of that. The only time we get a break is when we steams from one net to the other and if he don't take a break, I don't get a break. If the lump starts to get caught up on to us it needs to be done. He's handling the nets so I'll get back there and do the lump. It's steady work all the time. The only time you get a break is when you're coming in across to here.

Other fishermen talks about him too and says, "One of these days that man is going to die out there. He does too much." And I says to him, "I don't understand it. We goes out when other people goes out fishing and we comes in when they comes in and finish our work about 4:00 or 5:00 o'clock. Then you sees them in the evening in the summertime in their good clothes walking around the roads and you're still at the stage saying you got work to do. You're not content to sit down, you got to be at something every ten minutes and that's what you expect me to be at all the time." He wants me to be at it too (02-07-05).

This woman has to endure difficult, stressful working conditions imposed by her husband. Sometimes she is not even able to take a break or eat lunch. This has implications for her health and safety on the water because tiredness can increase the

likelihood of errors. While his control of the work environment and the work intensity are stressful for her, she is also worried about him as she fears he will fall ill as a result of his work habits.

This section has introduced the sixteen women fish harvesters, and explored some key aspects of their work as fish harvesters including their working relationship with their husbands aboard the fishing boats. Next I will introduce some of the major changes taking place in the fishing industry and their effects on the environment within which women live and work. I also provide an analysis of the shifting demographics in the fish harvester workforce.

3.4 Work Environments in the Restructuring Fishery and Women's Health

The broader context associated with fisheries work is a powerful determinant of fish harvesters' health and well being. Since the 1980s, environmental and policy restructuring have altered the inshore fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador such that it is now a very different place in which to earn a living. One major outcome of these environmental and policy changes is a shift in the demographic make up of the fish harvester workforce – a decrease in the number of men fishing and a concurrent increase in the number of women working as inshore fish harvesters. Other effects of fisheries restructuring involve the downloading of costs associated with fishing onto fishing families, new practices related to fisheries resource management, increasing surveillance of women regarding rights to fisheries EI, and the intensification of fish harvesters work on

the water. All these changes need to be analyzed for their effects on the health of fish harvesters.

3.4.1 Women's Participation in the Fish Harvesting Workforce

There have always been a small number of women fish harvesters working along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. However, oppressive Employment Insurance regulations singled out women, making recognition and compensation for their work all but impossible for women who fished with their husbands. After losing a number of court challenges by women fish harvesters in the 1980s, the federal government made some changes in the EI regulations regarding the treatment of women in fishing households.

Maureen Larkin found that, as a result, by the late 1980s, women in fishing families in Prince Edward Island were working on lobster boats in increasing numbers (1990, 118; Neis and Williams, 1997, 48). Since the mid 1980s, the increase in numbers of fish harvesters that are in part associated with EI changes has been accompanied by a push out of the industry as a result of declining fish stocks and a reduction in real income into Newfoundland's small boat fishing families. This has reduced the ability of fishing families to support multiple households. Since the early 1990s, fish plant closures in rural communities, the downturn in the fisheries, the high cost of living, out-migration of young men and women, and increases in women's workforce participation in male-dominated areas of the economy have helped to keep women in the small boat fishery and protected husband-wife enterprises. It has become both more possible and more necessary for

women in fishing households to earn an income from fishing.

Women's increasing presence as fish harvesters is, in part, a result of social and industrial restructuring in fishing communities where many employment opportunities, especially in fish processing, have been eliminated. The financial hardship and insecurity in many inshore fishing households has created an environment where women, as a cheaper source of labour, have taken up fish harvesting in order to ensure the survival of their fishing families and to meet the increasing costs of educating many of their children.

Fishing families, like many other families throughout Canada, need to have at least two incomes in order to survive. Women's income in fishing families is critically important. Many of the women interviewed in this study said that the annual income from fishing into their households has stayed the same for as long as they can remember. For decades, the annual income of fish harvesters in Atlantic Canada has been below the low income cut off (Connelly and MacDonald, 1995, 385). In 1990, the average total income in one-earner fishing families was \$16,946 before taxes, well below the low income cut-off of \$21,000 after taxes for a family of four living in a rural area. The second income into fishing households, which often comes from women's work, literally raises the family out of poverty. Two-earner fishing families earned an average of \$28,666 in 1990, putting them just above the low income cut-off (Task Force on Incomes and Adjustment in the Atlantic Fishery [the Cashin Report], 1993, 174).

One woman interviewed for this study talked about the importance of her income for her family and her use of that money for "all she needs." As it turns out, her needs

primarily involve paying the bills.

I got a pay cheque, no matter if it's big or small, it's mine. ... What we make we bring into this house and it's for us, which is fantastic in the long run. The winter months where the electricity bills are higher, it's great for me because where I get EI, I know I got so much for the bills. That's all I need. It's great that way (01-02-05).

As Connelly and MacDonald (1995) explain, women's response to fisheries restructuring is based on their role as women, wives, and members of a fishing household. In the household, "policies come together in their effects, and these effects are different on women and men" (1995, 387). Women in fishing families have a long tradition of adapting their work patterns in order to contribute to the family fishing effort.

It is important to determine the extent of women's participation in the fish harvesting workforce from a statistical point of view. Through Census data I attempted to trace the number of women who worked as fish harvesters between 1971 and 1996. Determining the exact number of fish harvesters in the province is difficult and these data should be viewed cautiously. Figure #1 shows women's and men's participation as fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador for this period. Figures are for workers who self-identify that they work on fishing vessels as their primary occupation. This includes standard occupational classification (SOC) codes 7311 – fishing vessel captains and other officers, and 7313 – fishermen: net, trap, and line. According to these data, the greatest increase in the number of women fish harvesters took place during the 1980s, slowing somewhat through the 1990s. During the 1990s the male workforce decreased substantially from 11,825 in 1991 to 8,780 in 1996. Women's participation also dropped

during that period, from 1,510 in 1991 to 1,310 in 1996 but, due to the decrease in the number of men fishing, the percentage of women in the fish harvester workforce increased from 11% in 1991 to 13% by 1996.

Other data were sought to try and more accurately assess the number of women and men fish harvesters in the province. One source which may provide a more accurate workforce analysis was drawn from Statistics Canada Tax Filer data compiled in the 1993 Cashin Report (Table 15: Employment in the Fishery by Gender, Sector and Province, 1981-1990, p.157). These figures indicate the number of women and men fish harvesters who filed income tax returns between 1981 and 1990. In addition to the data from the Cashin report, I incorporated data on currently registered fish harvesters for 2000 from the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board. The Board's figures are also based on reported income from full-time fish harvesting.

Both sources of workforce data may not be entirely representative of the fish harvester workforce. Not all fish harvesters went through the certification process and some women and men fish harvesters are no doubt fishing without certification. However, given the large number of fish harvesters who are applying for certification, I suspect that the number of fish harvesters fishing without certification is low. Likewise, the data from the Cashin report may contain both over and under-reporting of fish harvesters.

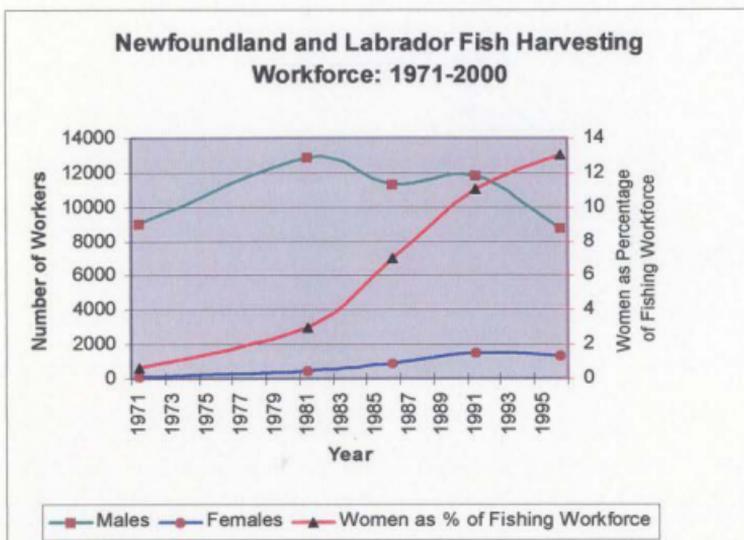


Figure 1: Fish Harvesters Workforce, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1971-1996.
Source: Census Canada

These Tax Filer and Professional Fish Harvester's Certification data are compiled in Figure #2. They show that in 1981, there were 1,480 women reporting an income from fishing. In 1990 that figure had risen to 3,050. By 2000, a total of 3,116 women had been given certification by the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board, making up 20% of the fish harvester workforce in the province. The male workforce has been steadily decreasing. In 1981, 15,900 men reported an income from fishing. In 1990 that figure had decreased to 13,880 and by 2000, it had decreased again as 12,656 men were

given certification. This represents an overall decrease of over 26% since 1981. As expected, the major increase in the number of women working on fishing boats took place during the 1980s. In the 1990s, the number of women reporting an income from fishing remained quite stable but due to the decrease in male fish harvesters, the overall proportion of women in the fish harvesting workforce continued to increase.

Further analysis of data from the Cashin report indicate that increasing numbers of women are reporting incomes from fish harvesting since the 1980s throughout all four Atlantic provinces. Table #2 draws on tax filer data from Statistics Canada showing the number of women and men reporting incomes from fish harvesting between 1981 and 1990 in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. These figures show that the number of male fish harvesters increased in every province except Newfoundland and Labrador where it decreased from 15,900 in 1981 to 13,880 in 1990. The number of female fish harvesters doubled in Newfoundland and Labrador but it almost quadrupled in Nova Scotia during that time. All the Atlantic provinces showed an increase in the number of women reporting incomes from fishing.

	NFLD		NS		PEI		NB	
Year	Male	Female (% women)	Male	Female (% women)	Male	Female (% women)	Male	Female (% women)
1981	15900	1480 (8)	10660	640 (6)	2550	630 (20)	4520	480 (10)
1990	13880	3050 (18)	12150	2460 (17)	3200	1230 (28)	5400	1190 (18)

Table #2: Fish Harvesters (Self-Employed and Wage Earning) in NFLD and Labrador, Nova Scotia, PEI and New Brunswick (1981 and 1990).

Source: Statistics Canada Tax Filer data as cited in the Cashin Report, 1993, p.157.

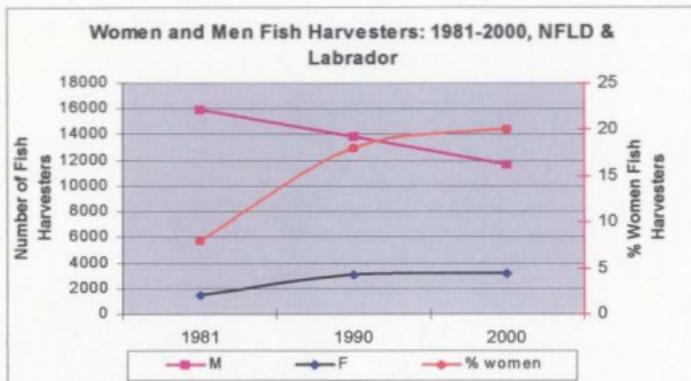


Figure 2: Women and Men Fish Harvesters in NFLD and Labrador 1981-2000.
Sources: Cashin Report, 1993, 157; Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board.
 men and Men Fish Harvesters in NFLD and Labrador

I also wanted to know more about women harvesters' status in the industry. I looked at this by determining the distribution of species licenses between women and men. As seen in Table #3, 123 women (2.2%) hold licenses compared to 5,522 (97.8%) men. These figures were re-compiled from DFO licensing data for Newfoundland and Labrador in order to show the gender breakdown in license distribution between women and men. Licenses to large offshore companies are not represented in these data as they were removed by DFO officials.

One hundred twenty-three women hold 368 major species licenses (only 1.6% of all licenses are held by women). This is an average of four licenses each. A majority of these women hold licenses for groundfish, lobster, squid and crab. In contrast, 5,022 men hold 22,129 major species licenses. This represents an average of 4.4 licenses each. The

majority of men hold licenses for groundfish, lobster, squid and crab. In miscellaneous species licenses, women hold an additional 141 licenses (1.6% of all miscellaneous license holders) compared to men, who hold 8,492 licenses.

Major Species Type	# of Licenses held by Women (Females = 123)	# of Licenses held by Men (Males = 5522)	Licenses held by All (Total = 5645)
Groundfish	53	2711	2764
Cod	1	10	11
Groundfish exc. Cod	1	75	76
Groundfish exc. Cod & Lumpfish	3	209	212
Groundfish exc. Lumpfish	26	1740	1766
Lobster	63	2925	2988
Herring	24	2385	2409
Mackerel	28	1902	1930
Capelin	27	1985	2012
Salmon (Atlantic)	0	76	76
Salmon (Char)	0	1	1
Scallop	8	1130	1138
Squid	63	2648	2711
Swordfish	0	8	8
Snow Crabs (Queen - incl. Supplementary and Permits)	69	3864	3933
Tuna (Bluefin)	0	47	47
Shrimp (Prawn)	2	413	415
Total Major Species Type	368 (1.6%)	22129	22497
Miscellaneous Categories			
Eels	8	124	132
Trout	0	56	56
Whelk	26	1227	1253
Bait	69	3445	3514
Seal	38	3640	3678
Total Miscellaneous Categories	141 (1.6%)	8492	8633

Table #3: License Distribution Among Female and Male Fish Harvesters (Non-Company) by Species Type for 2001- Newfoundland and Labrador.

Source: DFO

3.4.2 The Increasing Costs Associated with Fishing

One of the greatest impacts of restructuring processes on fishing families is that the fishery is now a very expensive place to make a living. Fish harvesters themselves have borne the brunt of many of these escalating costs. They have to pay for dockside monitoring and fisheries observers on their boats. Union dues, license and permit fees, and the cost of supplies such as gasoline have all increased. Due to a reduction in herring stocks, many fish harvesters now have to purchase their bait. Others who hold only temporary licenses or permits for crab, rent crab pots. In order to advance in the professionalized fishery, fish harvesters are required to take expensive training and pay certification fees. Many women in the study worried about these increasing costs. One woman described the financial pressure this way:

Usually the prices for [fish] now are half-decent so it's not like one time – one time you didn't get much. But then it costs us more now to be in the fishery than it did one time too. So, in a way it's harder because we got to pay for so many things. Before we start fishing for example it costs us about \$1000 for license and union dues. That's before we can even say we're going fishing. That's what it costs us. A lot of our money goes for expenses and license fees, union dues, monitor fees and observer fees. Then you got gasoline: last year the gasoline was so expensive. We burned the same amount of gas but it cost us a lot more. It's costing us more to make our living and it's harder in that sense. The license fees for example went from \$30 to \$100 and we got lobster, cod and lump licenses. We got a crab permit and we got scallop, herring and mackerel licenses.

We have to pay observer fees for the group of people out there that observe the fisheries. We, the fishery people, have to pay for that and then there's monitors out there that monitor your catch from the wharves. We got to pay for that even though we don't have a wharf or a monitor. For the monitor fees, we pay a cent and a half to two cents a pound – that's what we got to pay. For the observer fees, we pay \$90 a year up front for

the enterprise. We got a crab permit and we got to pay on the percentage of crab that we get so if we get a big quota, the permit can cost a lot. In our case the permit is 100 or so dollars and then you got to pay an observer fee on top of that. Another thing came up last year – the grading of fish. It's a good thing but it's more money taken out of your catch again. Well, we don't pay for it directly but when it comes to negotiating the price of the fish, well that's taken out somehow so you pay for it no matter what (02-03-07).

Another woman described the complicated fisheries policies she has encountered with something as straightforward as collecting bait. She understands these policies and practices as nothing more than attempts by the federal government to drive some fish harvesters out of the fishery altogether.

Fishermen just get right fed up. You don't realize, you got to get a permit, you got to get a license, you got to do this, you got to do that. Before you could just go fish. So much licensing.

If you want herring for bait, you got to pay \$5.00 but then if you want bait for lobster, you got to go pay another \$5.00. If you want bait for crab you got to pay another \$5.00 for crab. And us there with a herring license that we paid \$30.00 for but we still got to pay them \$5.00. It don't make sense. They're giving fishermen a hard time so everyone will take the buyout. That's what it feels like and sometimes you feels like it but they got to realize that we got families ... (02-05-06).

Since the 1992 moratorium, licences have increased in cost and decreased in availability. There is a more pronounced dependence on multiple species such as lobster, lumpfish, crab and shrimp which helps compensate for the reductions in cod and other groundfish quotas but increases pressure on these other species.

3.4.3 Cod Allocations and Seasonal Overlaps

Another area where restructuring is affecting fish harvesters relates to the timing of when species can be harvested. Before the moratorium and fisheries restructuring, fish harvesters would rely on traditional knowledge to dictate when they fished a particular species. Women talked about “start[ing] with lobster and switch[ing] over to cod *when it came around.*” There was a relatively smooth transition from one species to the next and the *fish* determined the time they would catch it, not people in organizations in St. John’s or Ottawa. In the present fishery, such traditional knowledge and practices are undermined as markets, governments, and a multitude of organizations determine the timing of when fish should be caught, the quantity that will be caught, and the amount they will get paid for their catch. One woman talked about the conflict and frustration she experienced with the odd timing of openings and closings in her area:

They’re too late opening the cod fishery this year. There’s no fish – just the skinny little slinky fish. See the fish have migrated by then and they come back in September. Then you’ll see a difference. There was never nothing here in the summer months. The winter months was the best time here but they don’t allow that no more. There’s lots of cod then, around twenty to twenty-four inches long, but in the summer months we get the little slinky ones (02-07-07).

Ironically, many of the changes that have come about have put pressure on fish harvesters to buy bigger boats, a move which runs counter to a policy goal of reducing over-capacity. There is also less fish and therefore fish harvesters need to go further from shore in order to catch their full quotas and hold licenses for multiple species. Many of the women said having a bigger boat is the only way they can make a living in the

restructured fishery. However, mainly for financial reasons, most will not be able to afford bigger boats.

Women explained that one major pressure to buy bigger boats relates to the allocation of cod quotas to large areas. In each NAFO zone, there are competitive quotas (see Figure #3, page 225 for a map of NAFO zones). Individual fish harvesters are permitted to catch a certain amount of cod over a period of time but once the overall quota is caught, the fishery closes. In the spring and late fall, bigger boats have a distinct advantage because they can go out in rougher weather whereas fish harvesters with smaller boats cannot. By the time the small boats get out, the quota is often all caught. In the following excerpt, a core fish harvester talks about the impact on their income of fisheries management policies related to cod quotas and the overturning of decisions made for safety reasons. For some inshore fish harvesters, the economic imperative of trying to eke out a living in the inshore fishery often prevails over decisions made for safety reasons.

Well we still fish cod but not as much. We got quotas right. We get one in June, one in July, and another in August and you got a percentage with this quota, right. But it's a big area and if we can't get out because the weather is bad, by the time we do get out, the quota could be caught. I mean we don't get nothing out of it and the big boats have the advantage. We don't have a fair deal at all. More or less you're trying to drown yourself to get out to make a dollar. I mean you can't wait till the weather is calm to go out. You got to go out – even if you decide not to go, you got to go (02-011-02).

The use of gill nets exacerbates this situation because if fish are left in the nets for too long, they spoil. Thus, fishermen have to go out and tend to their nets in all weather.

As we have seen, with the loss of groundfish, most fish harvesters now depend more on multiple species in order to make a living from fishing. Often there are overlaps between fisheries for different species and this further intensifies fishing activity on the water. Fish harvesters feel pressure from the overlaps in openings and closings because they have to be on the water for longer hours each day in order to catch multiple species. They often have to go further offshore for some species such as crab, and these distances are further than they normally would go in the small open boats associated with the inshore fishery.

These changes pose a number of concerns related to income, conservation, health, and safety, and are a source of worry for many women in this study. This was especially the case with women working in small open boats, which includes twelve women in this study. They said that overlaps between seasons created a hectic pace and dangerous conditions on the water. Some women who worked on larger boats that could safely handle the overlaps, linked them with conservation measures and felt they were necessary in order for their incomes to improve. One woman who fished with her husband and two other male crew members on a 34'11" boat said,

We did a lot better last year and it was the first year in a couple years that we did good so it makes it better. And that was the point of it ... We'll fish our lobster and while the lobster is on, the lump is on so that's taking the emphasis off all of lobster fishing too. So if you only had lobster you would haul your traps seven days a week but where you have lump you'll haul your lump for three days a week and leave your lobster traps so that gives the lobster a chance to come back too. The more you have to go at, the better chance the other species have (02-05-07).

3.4.4 Work Intensity

In addition to overlapping seasons, women also said that with restructuring, their work on fishing boats has become more concentrated and intense while the number of days actually spent fishing has decreased. As one woman said, "Well, basically we're part-time workers now. We're not full-time anymore" (01-05). For many fish harvesters this means a shorter season for each species but a more hectic work pace involving more time on the water each day. Aside from the health and safety implications of such practices, they have a lot of down time, especially during the summer months, and this can create a lot of stress because when they are not fishing they have no incomes. At present they wait until the early fall to file for their Employment Insurance, which they receive during the winter months while the inshore fishery is closed. The financial hardship and stress caused by the reduction in time spent on the water and their incomes during the summer months are particularly hard on women who have children at home. If they are only allowed to fish for one week a month during the summer, which is often the case, that is all the income they have for that entire month. Women attempt to adjust to the lack of finances during the "dark times" in the summer when they cannot fish. Here one woman describes how she handles the down time and loss of income from fishing.

What you do is, the bit of time that you work in the spring, you save for when you're not working in the summer and it makes it very difficult. There's things you need to do with your home that you just can't do because you got to save this money cause you got, well you got your light bills, you got your phone bills, your groceries bills, you always got that, right, and you can't spend your money because you're waiting. The dark times are coming again and you know they're coming, when you're not

going to be working. You know, it would be nice to have the option to get a week's EI in the summertime when you're not making any money (01-05-11).

3.4.5 EI Policies and Women Fish Harvesters

EI policies affect women's work environments because of the way these policies restrict the type of work that is recognized for purposes of EI eligibility in ways that are gendered. Basically, eligible work done by fish harvesters is determined by the amount of fish sold in their name. As one woman in the study explained, as a woman fish harvester you gain a bit of respect only when you, "do the work and do what they think you should be doing" (01-02-07). Whereas in the past, women did much of the ground crew work for the fishing enterprise, now these women are under increasing pressure to go fishing and to *be seen* going fishing by those in government, the fishing industry and in their communities. Due to these increased pressures from EI regulations and local talk that women are abusing the EI system, more and more women appear to be fishing on the water, increasing their visibility in the fishing workforce. Here one woman interviewed described the situation of a friend who also fished:

She told me she had to go in the boat. She had to because of all the stigma – she just couldn't stay home and do that anymore. I assume she did in the beginning, right, but then it got to the point where she had to go in the boat to fish (01-04-15).

In the interviews, women talked about the way their work patterns are monitored by people who watch women to see who is actually fishing and who is not because they

want to know who is really 'entitled' to Employment Insurance. Even though these women all fish aboard boats on a regular basis, they are well aware of the generalizations made about them as women in relation to their rights to EI, the monitoring of their work in fishing, and the stigma attached to women fishing. One woman described her experience as a fish harvester and living in a small community where she experiences the stigma attached to fishery work in general, the undervaluing of women, and the EI monitoring.

I don't even think that people recognize that you're there and that you're doing this thing. A lot of people say you're just out to get your EI and you're doing this. A lot of people say women have never been out in the boat. Well, that's not the case with me – probably some people don't go, I don't know. It's sort of a sarcastic thing [around here] for doing that. It's almost like you're doing something that you shouldn't be doing sort of thing.

Women's place is seriously downplayed – you're there but we got no voice really. ... I mean this is how we make our living. If we were in another industry we would be recognized for who we are but as being a fisherperson, you're not. It's like there's something wrong with you. When you come ashore from the boat you're in a mess and where we get off there's a store nearby and people coming out look at you and they make you feel right inadequate, as if to say, "look at the mess you're in!" But I mean you just came in off a fishing boat. So that's not too pleasant but I guess you got to put up with that (01-05-06).

The devaluing of their work as fish harvesters and the stigma attached to women who fish is an additional aspect of their work lives confronting many of these women and affecting their health. Here another woman describes an incident that happened at the wharf as she was coming in one afternoon.

One day I was coming into the wharf on a cold day in November and we were having hailstones that day and we were taking the gear off the boat so [my husband] could get at baiting again. This man walked up to the boat and he said, "My God, there's something wrong with your head, you got the woman out in the boat on a day like this. There's something wrong with you, you know." Then he looked at me and said, "You should be home. What are you doing out in the boat?" and I said, "If I didn't go out in the boat, people like you would have something else to talk about." [My husband] said that I shouldn't be saying things like that but I said, "Why not? If I wasn't out there he'd be complaining that way so you're damned if you do and damned if you don't" (01-02-06).

3.5 Work Relations and Support Networks Outside the Household

Women's relations with co-workers, other fish harvesters in their communities and fisheries institutions are indicators of their support systems and are important determinants of their health. I next explore the quality and amount of family, community and institutional support women receive and how this influences how they see themselves as fish harvesters, the way they see their place in the fishery and their involvement in institutions within the industry.

3.5.1 Women's Relations with Extended Family and Co-Workers

Most women said that other family members such as parents and brothers and sisters were generally quite supportive of their decision to go fishing. At first they were a bit shocked but, over time, they have adjusted to them working as fish harvesters. One woman had the following to say when I asked her to describe the level of support she gets from extended family:

[Laughs] None of them likes to see me doing it. I can tell you that much. They figure it's no place for a woman but of course that's my choice. And there's not much to choose from around here because there's no work around here – it's either that or nothing. They support me I suppose they'd rather if I wasn't at it (02-02-02).

Women spoke about the reaction of their parents to them working as fish harvesters. A few women said their parents had hoped that they would pursue other areas of work. One woman's mother wanted her to go to university and another woman said her mother would have liked it if she had become a nurse. Another woman talked about the reaction from her father who would chastise her if she went out fishing on a rough day: "When Dad was alive, he used to come down on real bad days and he'd say, 'Get ashore by and get up to that house.'"

As is traditional in the Newfoundland fishing industry, many crew members belong to the same family and this was the case with a number of women in this study. For most of them, other crew members are brothers or brothers-in-law, father, father-in-law, etc. Only one woman in the study worked with another woman – her daughter-in-law.

All the women who work with other crew members said they get along very well. One woman said, "Sometimes I'll look at them and think that they'll probably say, 'You move aside now and I'll get back there,' but no, they never do. Whatever job they put me at, I got to do it and that's it" (01-02-06). Another woman described what it was like to work on a longliner with a crew of five.

On the bigger boat there's two more men, but they're all family. We have a good relationship. We get along well. ... We don't have any problems and we helps one another out. We go in to try to get our bait ready the

day before if it's not a miserable day. We go down on the beach together to cut up the bait and get the gas ready. I cooks, well, I shouldn't say I cooks supper all the time. We take turns cooking. I cooks one day and someone else cooks the next day. We take turns cooking and cleaning. We pack our lunches for the next day. As for me as a woman, they don't put on me as a woman for me to cook and clean. No, that's not the case. I can honestly say that there's no pressure on me like that. ... We have a good relationship when we work together on the long liner. We got two other men and they don't put on me because I'm a woman in the workforce – that it's a woman's place to do this or that. I think men are changing. One cooks and then I'll cook and one cleans aboard the boat (01-01-04).

3.5.2 Women's Interaction With Other Fish Harvesters

Two women said they have sisters who live nearby who fish full-time. In both cases, these women talked regularly, both on and off the water, and confided in each other about their work. Eight women said they have women friends who fish, and another woman has a daughter-in-law who recently started fishing. Five women had young daughters who fish during the summer months when they are not in school.

Some women in the study also talked about becoming friends with male fish harvesters. This usually happened aboard the boats where they worked together as crew members or, in some cases, while doing work onshore such as baiting gear at the wharf. The woman in the following excerpt describes how her relationship with them evolved and grew. In order to be seen as a serious (male) fish harvester, she goes through a testing period where she is challenged by male fish harvesters to show that she can be like the men. This requires proving that she is rough and tough by dispelling any idea that, "she's a woman – she's a wimp." Like other women who work in male dominated occupations,

she trades in aspects of her feminine identity in her attempts to fit into a male-dominated workplace. By proving, over time, that she is “no wimp,” she manages to pass the test, and they now treat her as “one of the men.”

Another aspect of her work as a fish harvester relates to a close call that took place on the water a few years ago. This incident served to draw her and other male fish harvesters closer together because they depend on each other, at times, for their very lives. Like other women in the study, this woman has become closer to these men since they rescued her and her husband after their motor gave out on the water.

FH: I don't know what goes on in other communities but I know that down here it's good. I get along with all them just the same as I would the women. They treat me the same as – you know – I'm a fisher person right? Oh yes, they treat me good. They all do. I got no complaints at all about every man down there – we all get along really good. I guess what it is – I didn't always, but as they got to know me, they more or less treat me as one of the men now, you know. I can be as saucy as they can, talk back like they do. It shocks them. Oh yeah, first thing now – OK well, she's a woman, she's a wimp. But this woman is no wimp and you're going to know it. Oh yeah, I get along with all of them. Well there's one down there I don't get along with. I told him off a couple of times.

I: Do you have a lot of interaction with them?

FH: Oh yes. The way it is, most of them are – uh, friends – even when we're not fishing, they're here. ... I know one time we were coming into the mouth of the river and we lost control of the boat. The sea put us sideways. There was three or four of the fishermen on the beach and of course I couldn't hear them but they were yelling, “Hold on Marie (pseudonym), hold on!” This was the time I wanted to jump out of the boat but [my husband] wouldn't let me. He figured I was safer in the boat than I would have been if I had jumped out so I stayed in the boat. Then his brother jumped in his boat and came out and helped us get her back. It was frightening. They're a good bunch of men. They wouldn't see you in trouble or anything like that (02-02-04).

Another woman talked about two incidents where she helped out other fish harvesters when they got sick and injured on the water. In both incidents she had to bring the boat ashore. Recently she was hurt in a skidoo accident and it was the fishermen who went in the woods and brought her out. "We look out for one another and it's the same on the water."

Even though some friendships have developed, women are also aware that other male fish harvesters around their communities are not so accepting of them. On the one hand, they are invisible and, on the other hand, on the wharf and in fisheries meetings, their presence as women is glaringly obvious. One woman talked about not doing fishery work on the wharf such as baiting gear when they are done fishing: "When we get back in, he has to bait all his gear and I don't know how to do that. I wouldn't want to go down there baiting gear where all those men are to" (01-02-03).

In the interviews, women also talked about being watched by the men. In the following excerpt, another woman who has only been fishing for four years talks about being watched by male fish harvesters, but she does not think too much of it and just gets on with her work.

You got some out there who thinks women can't do it but I've been down to the stage baiting gear. I don't know if they notices me. I suppose they sees me there stood up baiting gear just like one of them and I talk to them there baiting the gear. When you're down there, there'll always be someone coming in from fishing and they'll watch you. They don't bother me. I guess they're used to seeing me out there now. Sometimes you gets boats come up along side you when you're doing your nets. You just keep on with your nets. You know it's nothing, right. I guess they're used to seeing you there so they just thinks of you as one of them and you're just

doing your work and that's it (02-07-03).

She explains that she often talks to the men while she is baiting the gear. Here she reflects on some aspects of their conversations which, while friendly enough, still have a tone that suggests her whereabouts are being monitored:

I've been told lots of times by the men that comes down on the wharf that I'm working too hard: "My dear, you'll kill yourself if you stays at that stuff doing that." Well I mean I just says it's part of the job and I does it and I don't complain, right? ... This old gentleman, the same thing, he'll come in and he knows there's a bit of wind there and he'll say, "That's some hard day out there again today ain't it?" And when we're out there in the summertime and you comes in burned up, as black as tar, he'll come up to me and say, "Well I knows what you've been at again today" (02-07-08).

Part of being watched relates to men's curiosity about women doing "men's" work, and sometimes it goes no further than that. However, at other times, women and their husbands have been confronted by male fish harvesters who voice their disagreement – one said that having women on the water "spoils" them. Here a woman describes one such incident.

I remember when I first started, one of my husband's friends came up to the wharf and I was aboard the boat. He looked down and when he saw me on the boat he said to my husband, "What a sin. Do you know you're going to ruin your wife putting her aboard the boat like that? You're going to have her spoiled." Now I don't know what he meant by that, whether he was talking about my complexion or physically, but that's what he said. I've often wondered about that since then. All of a sudden you've got those women aboard the boats and look what you're going to do to them, physically you're going to tear them apart. It's hard work. With a woman if you got lines – with a man you're considered romantic and debonair, but if you're a woman it's a totally different story (01-04-08).

As women spend more time on the fishing boats and more and more fish harvesters get used to seeing them there doing the work, they say that things eventually have been getting better for them.

As you go on, everybody looks at you a little different. If you go do the work and do what they think you should be doing, they gain a bit of respect for you. They look at you a little differently than they did in the beginning. Now it's getting to be almost an accepted thing for a woman to be aboard the boat anyway. We're getting accepted more and more. In the beginning we weren't and we had that stigma attached to us. Now most people see us out there as workers and that's what we got to do to survive (01-04-07).

3.5.3 Support from Others in the Community

Women talked about problems with the perceptions of others in the community that sometimes devalue and downplay the work of all fish harvesters. The woman in the following excerpt talks about the way teachers pass these attitudes on to young children. She also says that her understanding of the amount of work that needs to be done changed since she went fishing.

You know there are people in the community who say, "lazy fishermen, they don't do nothing." My kids have come home from school and said that the teachers were talking about fishing and saying, "What do they do anyway?" I said to the kids: "You don't realize how hard they work – not even the hours." You can't even put in the hours because no matter if you're on the water or not, you still got something to do as soon as you're ashore. I did this out there, and I got to fix that and you're running and going, you know. So it's all the time, from the time you goes to bed until the time you get up. It doesn't matter what other people feel, I said, "You got to be there to see how hard a fisherman works, in order to know and appreciate it really." That's what I've learned since I've been fishing is the work that you put into it (02-010-05).

When women were asked if they talked about their paid work to others in the community, twelve said yes and four said no. I also asked them how difficult it was for them to talk about their paid work in the community and one woman said it was very hard, three said it was hard, six said somewhat easy and six others said it was very easy to talk about their paid work. One main reason women find it difficult to talk about their work relates to their access to EI as women and as fish harvesters. One woman described the attitudes she encounters from people in her community:

FH: They say, "Well yeah, she's another one."

I: What do they mean by that?

FH: I guess just the point of going fishing with your husband for EI – that's mostly why you're into it. But see I don't look at it that way. If I wasn't fishing and getting my EI, I'd probably be working elsewhere (02-010-06).

Other women talked about organizing events in their communities to help overcome their invisibility and improve the image of women fish harvesters. One woman made the following suggestions:

We should do things for the community. We should make sure we're visible. We should make sure we're on different committees and stuff because that improving our image a little bit because our image is tarnished big time (01-04-17).

3.5.4 Women's Interaction with Fishery and Government Institutions

Women were asked to describe the amount of contact they have with fisheries and government organizations on fishery-related issues. Most of them said they contact DFO

representatives regularly to get information about fishing regulations and safety equipment they are required to have aboard the boat. Three women said they are actively involved in inshore fishery councils and the FFAW union and they attend meetings regularly. These women felt it was valuable and important work although it was often quite stressful, both emotionally and financially, and very time consuming as well.

When asked if they attend fisheries meetings, four women said 'yes' but twelve said 'no.' The vast majority of women said they do not attend fishery meetings at this time, but some of them used to attend meetings and have since stopped. One reason they do not attend is because the fisheries councils have such little influence on the outcome of fishery policies and practices. The woman in the following excerpt explained her frustration with being on fishery committees and attending the meetings. She has all but withdrawn from these.

FH: Well I went to meetings but what I find is when you go to meetings with all these professionals, they say things and the next day there's a different statement made. I know one year we were talking about increasing the size of our lobsters ... Now, we agreed on a smaller size and they said, "That's OK, that's what we'll do this year and next year we'll put it up to the larger size." The next day it was on the radio that they put it up to the larger size, the size that they wanted even though they agreed to our face on the smaller size.

I: Are you on any of these committees?

FH: Yes, I was on the fisheries committee.

I: So you were attending all these meetings?

FH: Yes and this is what I was putting up with.

I: Do you still go to meetings?

FH: No, I don't see the justice in going to meetings unless it's on lobsters (02-05-03).

Another reason women do not attend fisheries meetings is related to the confrontational style of conduct at the meetings: "You go to a meeting with a crowd of fishermen and it's a shouting match, basically, is what it boils down to. Nothing is solved ... One is trying to shout louder than the other because everyone's opinion is the right one" (01-05-16). Many women said they are not comfortable with this approach to holding meetings. One woman, a core fish harvester, who has stopped attending meetings talks about her reasons for not attending. She makes it clear that, outside these meetings, if she is asked her opinion on the fishery, she has no problem saying what she thinks should be done:

I: Do you ever go to any of the fisheries committee meetings?

FH: Yes.

I: Do you ever speak up?

FH: Well I haven't been there in a while. I don't see much sense in going really because there don't be really anything done.

I: Is there a lot of arguing?

FH: Yes. It's not a very nice way to work so I don't even bother to go to them anymore.

I: When you would go would you be the only woman there?

FH: No, there'd be other women there, some, not many.

I: Would they have much to say?

FH: No, but like if some people ask me about the fishery – what should be done, what shouldn't be done, if I got anything to say, I'll say it, right? But I don't think it's necessary to get into full blown arguments about it. It's not worth the time and it's not worth making bad friends over.

I: Why do you think they interact that way about the fisheries?

FH: I don't know. I think they're getting more and more frustrated all the time because I mean everything is so regulated. You got to have monitors for this and monitors for that and observers aboard the boats and stuff like that and all that comes out of our pay – monitor fees, everything. It all comes out. Even if you take a few fish home to do up for the winter, it's all monitored. You even got to pay the monitors so much of a percentage for taking a fish home. It shouldn't be, right?

I: Do you remember going to the fisheries meetings when you first started working on the fishing boats?

FH: Yes. I went to a good few of them.

I: Were they always argumentative?

FH: Yes, they always were (02-011-01).

Another woman who does not attend the local fisheries meetings describes here how she encourages her husband not to get into any arguments as he leaves the house for a meeting:

I tries to tell him to not get into arguments but you do tend to get into arguments about it. That's how you voice your frustration about everything, right? Then when he comes home I ask him: "How did it go?" "Oh, not too bad." And I'll say, "We'll talk about it and get it off your chest." That's how we communicate. When there's something wrong we just talk about it. I don't like him getting into big arguments but I know it's going to come (01-01-08).

Twelve women pay union dues and four do not. Some of the latter decided to withdraw from the union out of frustration after decisions were made that went against

what had been agreed on at community meetings. Another woman explained that withdrawing from the union meant there was one less bill to pay:

We weren't getting anything done for us so we decided not to pay any more. That was about four years ago. They weren't doing much for us at all – we still get the bills but we just ignore them. They more or less try and blackmail us – that if we don't pay our dues we'll have no voting rights and all this stuff (02-02-03).

Withdrawing from the union could present a problem for these women (and their husbands) because professionalization criteria specify that all fish harvesters must be paid up union or cooperative members. According to section 1.12 of the Code of Ethics being enforced by the Professional Fish Harvester's Certification Board, all fish harvesters are required to be, "a member in good standing of an organization recognized by the Labour Relations Board to represent fish harvesters" (PFHCB, June - 2000, 5). Section 20 of the Fish Harvester's Act specifies that fish harvesters who are not members of a union or the fisheries co-operative may have disciplinary measures (including fines of up to \$10,000) taken against them.

One woman who has always supported the union, describes how she has been speaking up at meetings for years in her attempts to get a pension and health plan for fish harvesters. So far, they have received nothing.

We got a union and we got no pension and no health plan ... But there's another thing, I mean, I don't think, in a way, that we can put enough away for our retirement, because we don't have a pension plan. But like I said, I think about it, but I don't worry about it. The Lord takes care of basically everything but you do think about it. I'm one of the persons who mentioned it to the union many times, about things like that. It's like the health plan. We don't have the health plan either. If something happens to

one of us, we got to pay for everything and I did mention that to the union many times but nothing's come out of it yet. They did mention last year that they were working on something, some kind of health plan for the fisher people but nothing's come out of it yet. And, like, for a pension plan, too, I did mention it to them many times but sometimes I wonder why I'm fighting for it because I don't think it's going to do us any good because we're getting at that age now. Even if they did create a pension plan, it wouldn't be much good to us now but the health plan probably would do us good anyway because as you get older you tend to get more medical problems (02-03-06).

Some other women also have a close relationship with the union and there are signs that some of these women have begun to challenge men in the union to make more space for women fish harvesters. One woman says she has been arguing with her husband over the past three or four years and recently, she, along with some other women, will be "changing the tables" – beginning with the traditional way fishermen have handled Christmas bonuses from the fish plant. With the familiarity of Sojourner Truth who in 1851 said, "Ain't I a woman?" this woman fish harvester says, "There's only men involved [in the Christmas party] but I'm part of the fishery."

[E]very year the fish harvesters get a bonus from the plant. They has a little get together and have free drinks for Christmas. There's only men involved but I'm part of the fishery. I mean I've been having this argument with my husband now for the past three or four years to try to change it. We're trying to get something that will bring everyone together. They just go there as men – there's no women and I'm a fish harvester but I don't feel like going up there with a crowd of men. So what we're trying to do is to change the tables on them and get everyone together at one time. So we're trying to get a Christmas dance (01-01-08).

In one area, a few women talked about getting support from the fisheries union to start up a local committee for women of the fishery. One woman said that, "the union is

utmost that way because ... the committee will be through the union so we've had some help in that way" (01-01-08). While only one woman interviewed had a connection to the FFAW's Women's Committee, other women agreed with the importance of local support groups for women in the fishery. Being a union member and a woman fish harvester, one woman felt that it is, in part, her responsibility to try and help women fish harvesters gain more recognition.

So, I guess I'm part of the union, so it's probably part of my job, especially as a woman fish harvester. You can't expect the men to go out and make us visible. They're not conditioned to do that so I guess we just got to do that ourselves. Hopefully this committee ... will be the start of it. If we can form one group that works, maybe somebody else somewhere in the province will say, "That's a good idea. We should do that, you know." – to have local pockets of women's groups and support. If we can get organized we can do it. ... We're not visible because we're not recognized and women in the boats are isolated (01-04-07).

A final aspect of women's interaction with government and fisheries organizations relates to women's interactions with Revenue Canada and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) over EI issues. Some women interviewed said they had been questioned about their knowledge of fishing for years by HRDC when they would file their EI claims, ostensibly to ascertain the truthfulness of their claims, but none had experienced such questioning in recent years. One woman said, "They would ask me for details about the boat and how to bait the trawl but they don't quiz me any more."

Another institutional issue relates to the difficulty some women experience in being able to provide adequate daycare for dependent children while they are fishing. In these cases, women have insisted on hiring relatives as child care workers but they have had

difficulty with Revenue Canada refusing EI benefits because the work was deemed not to be at arms length. Two women talked about having such difficulties finding and keeping reliable child care workers because of Revenue Canada's refusal of their EI claims. Here one woman tells us her experience trying to get a suitable child care worker for her grandchild for whom she had responsibility while her daughter attended college. Although the child care worker she hired took care of her grand-daughter for long hours each day while she was out fishing, Revenue Canada would not approve her claim for EI.

I had sole responsibility for my daughter's little girl because she was in St. John's at school. Last year I had to hire a babysitter to look after her – this is one of the things I wanted to tell you about. We kept her here for a year when her mother was in school because she was finding it hard to find day-care in St. John's. I hired my other daughter to look after her and I paid her for doing it. She did work the hours but do you know that she wasn't able to get EI for that because they said we didn't work at arms length? I was supposed to hire a babysitter between 9:00am and 5:00pm usually is the hours for a babysitter but that was useless to me. I needed someone to live here in this house and naturally I hired someone that I knew I could trust. But someone you can trust is often a family member and they're not at arms length. My grand-daughter was sixteen months old at the time. She was a very timid little child and the only way I could get someone to look after her was to hire someone that she knew and trusted. That wasn't any good – it didn't work out at all. She couldn't draw EI. She appealed it, but it still didn't work. I couldn't leave a two-year old child from 2:00 in the morning until 9:00 when a babysitter could show up.

I found that to be the biggest issue that I've ever come across in the fishery. I was very disappointed and if my daughter hadn't found a day-care for her in St. John's I would have had to quit my job in the fishery because I couldn't hire anybody suitable. I wouldn't be able to hire a relative that I trusted because they say you're not working at arms length (01-05-06).

3.6 Conclusions

Many small-boat inshore fishing enterprises are having difficulty sustaining multiple households like they did at one time. With the restructuring that has taken place since 1994, their fishing is now more often part-time, although the work itself has become more intense when they *are* fishing.

It is not surprising that given the broader context of the restructured fishery that the number of women fishing in the inshore fishery has been increasing. In 2000, women made up about 20% of the fishing workforce in Newfoundland and Labrador, an increase of 12% since 1981. During the same period, the number of men fish harvesters decreased by over 26%.

Women in this study have been fishing for an average of ten years although the years of experience among them varies quite a bit. One woman has been fishing for just one year, while others have twenty years of experience. This means that the range of their experiences, fishing knowledge, and levels of comfort are also quite varied. Women who went fishing prior to the downturn in the late 1980s did so for the same reasons as women who went fishing during the downturn, that is, to help protect family incomes. The difference in their experiences from those of women who went later is that, for the latter, an element of 'shock,' urgency, and crisis management is more evident.

While most women said it was their idea to go fishing, most of them also acknowledged that the loss of the groundfish and the subsequent restructuring of the industry are the real reasons they are fishing. Under 'normal' conditions, most of these

women would be working in jobs on land but life in rural fishing communities in rural Newfoundland and Labrador these days is far from normal. There were indications in more than one case, that as long as the fishery and economic conditions remain uncertain and insecure, leaving fishing is not an option for these women, regardless of how they feel about the work or the condition of their health.

Women's increased participation as fish harvesters should not be equated too readily with increased equality. The gender distribution of license holders shows the proportion of license holders who are women is very low. According to DFO data, at present there are 5,645 license holders in Newfoundland and Labrador, 5522 are men and 123 (2.2%) are women. Most licenses held by women are for groundfish, lobster, crab, and squid.

Restructuring processes in Atlantic Canada, while drawing women into the fishing industry in greater numbers, still seem to be perpetuating marginalization and these will likely restrict women's place in the industry. Women's duties aboard the boats are often segregated. They tend to be responsible for fast-paced and intensive fish processing tasks aboard the boats, while the husband operates the engine, hauls the pots/nets and operates and maintains other mechanical equipment.

Women's identity as fish harvesters can be fluid and ambiguous, reflecting their ongoing struggles to find their place and become competent and meaningful workers in the fishery. These struggles are both external and internal as they insist on being respected as workers and 'helpers' aboard the boat while at the same time, they challenge themselves

and others to move outside a limiting 'helper' identity.

For most women, the work environment aboard the boats is fairly positive and healthy. They get along well with their husbands and this is very important to them. One woman commented that cooperation on the boat is, "between life and death." Some women talked about how their relationships with their husbands have improved since they began working together. However, there are other aspects of their work that are cause for concern such as their triple workload during the fishing season, the pressures of new fisheries rules and regulations, and the segregation of their work aboard the fishing boats. Their continued marginalization in the fishery through restrictions on their work and license ownership undermines their ability to see themselves outside the 'helper' role.

Women's interaction with other crew members aboard the boats is also very positive. They have also built up a positive rapport with some other fishermen in their communities. However, they have also encountered resistance from some fishermen, especially when they first started fishing. One strategy for dealing with this resistance is to restrict their interaction with other fishermen and fishery institutions. Over the years, however, as women have insisted on a presence in the fishery, some of this resistance has died down and they have learned to work together and get along fairly well.

One issue that is very important for women's visibility and future in the fishery relates to their participation in fisheries-related institutions. Some women have always been active in fishery organizations and have worked on inshore fishery councils. Others have just started to become more active. However, this research showed that within this

sample, most women's involvement has been quite limited. In fact, in recent years their involvement in meetings has declined, although some women never did attend meetings. The confrontational style of the meetings, the lack of outcomes and reversal of decisions made at the meetings were given as the main reasons for their withdrawal or lack of attendance. A related issue is that four women in the study have also stopped paying union dues in recent years. This disenchantment with fisheries institutions is not common to all areas in this study. With the help of their union, women in other areas have recently begun challenging fishermen for space on a number of levels.

An important aspect of women's work environment is the reaction of some people in their communities to their work in the fishery. They talked about the way some people look down on fishery workers in general, as abusers of government programs. Women's description of attitudes they have encountered in their communities indicate that they feel their actions as fish harvesters are being monitored in order to determine whether or not they actually fish. As one woman said about being a woman fish harvester, "you're dammed if you do and dammed if you don't." If they do not fish they are abusers and if they do, they are only doing it for their EI. Women are coping with this EI stigma but it adds an element of stress to their already stressed work lives.

In the next chapter I will explore aspects of women's health by establishing connections between their work in the fishery and their health. I consider some of the health impacts of fisheries management policies and other issues such as work overload,

violence against women, and the adequacy of health services in rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

CHAPTER 4: RESTRUCTURING, SAFETY, AND HEALTH

4.1 Introduction

The social determinants of health approach is based on the notion that our health is determined primarily by the interaction between individual characteristics, a range of social, economic, and political factors, and physical environments. In chapter three, I explored aspects of women fish harvester's work environment, work responsibilities, and work relations and some implications of these for their health and well-being. Effects on women's identity as fish harvesters and the gendered dynamics of their work were central to this discussion. In this chapter, I will explore additional aspects of their physical and emotional health, including occupational health and safety at work.

Locating occupational health within the broader context of fisheries restructuring helps to shift the focus away from individual behaviours. As Theo Nichols explains, "people do not make their choices in circumstances of their own choosing and ... these circumstances merit examination in their own right" (1999, 88). Taking a broader perspective allows for analyses of the constraints and opportunities that affect women's lives by limiting or expanding support for them as women workers and affecting their capacity for autonomy, and ultimately their health.

This chapter expands on women fish harvester's experiences of work raised in the previous chapter and focuses on the links women make between fisheries restructuring and their health. This involves exploring the ways women connect aspects of fisheries

management policies with their daily work experiences in the fishery, and their health. The use of narratives provides depth of insight into their experiences as fish harvesters, life in a fishing household in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, the quality of institutional supports for women fish harvesters, and ways these affect their health. Analysis of women's narratives illuminates their understandings of risk, safety, and violence, the cause of injuries at work, diagnosed medical conditions, their personal health behaviours, and the quality of local health services in their area.

In addition to the use of women's narratives, I also draw on data from a series of fixed-response questions asked during the interviews. These are self-report type health questions that describe various aspects of women's emotional and physical health including diagnosed illnesses, treatments, injuries, and personal coping behaviours.

4.2 Women's Health Status

Women were asked a variety of fixed-response questions throughout the interviews in order to determine various aspects of their health. I began by asking them to rate their health at present. Two women said it was fair, four said good, nine said very good and one said her health was excellent. I wanted to know if these women's health had changed since they began working as fish harvesters. Eight women said their health has not changed at all during the time they have been fishing. Eight other women described both physical and emotional changes in their health as a result of their harvesting work. These changes may be marginally related to their work as fish processors. Three

women said their health had gotten better, four said it had worsened and one woman said she feels better emotionally but worse physically. In the following excerpt, one woman talks about both physical and emotional aspects of her health to explain what it is about working in the fishery that makes her feel better.

I: Has your health changed since you've been working as a fish harvester?

FH: Emotionally, yes, I feel good about myself. I am an outdoor person. I've always been an outdoor person and I think I got that from my mother because she was a great outdoor person. I'm doing something. One time being in the fishery was at the bottom of the list when it came to jobs but I feels good about myself. I mean I'm accomplishing something with my husband. We're fishing together, we got an excellent relationship ... When we come home we got family, we know what we're doing when we're fishing and we know what we're fishing for. Physically I feels good. When I'm done lobster fishing I'm probably in better shape than before I even went because I've been lifting and bending. For eight hours a day you're at something. Plus I'm outdoors all that time which is really good. I can't say that I have any health problems (01-01-08).

Working on a fishing boat, being outdoors, and doing a lot of physical work has made her physically and emotionally stronger. She also feels good about what she and her husband are able to do together for their family.

4.2.1 Injuries and Diagnosed Conditions

Certain aspects of work environments and work conditions promote certain types of injuries and illnesses and these may be different for women than they are for men.

Women in this study were asked to indicate the location of any pain they experience and what they felt was the origin of that pain. One woman said she had pain from arthritis all over. Pain in the knees, lower back, and hip were identified by four women. Pain in the

hands and shoulders were identified by three women, and in the side and ankles by two women. Pain in the neck, kidneys, elbows, head, upper back, and stomach were each identified by one woman. Two women said they did not experience any pain. Seven women said that their pain originated with their work as fish harvesters. Two women linked theirs to the fish plant and four others said they could not identify the origin of the pain. One woman said her pain resulted from a combination of fishing and other work.

Twelve women said they had sought medical advice for their pain. Eleven women were taking a variety of prescribed and off-the-shelf medication, but two women had recently stopped taking medications. All the women said that the pain does not interfere with their paid work, but seven said it interferes with their work at home. Most said they have to take more frequent breaks in order to rest.

Women were also asked if they had ever been diagnosed with any of a series of physical and mental conditions. Urinary tract infections led the list with nine women being diagnosed. Eight women reported diagnoses of asthma, six kidney infections, and three had been diagnosed with stomach ulcers, depression, and acid reflux. Two said they had been diagnosed with other digestive problems, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, and recurring migraines. Other diagnoses included chronic bronchitis, other allergies, skin rash, tennis elbow, bladder problems, kidney cyst, kidney stones, and endometriosis.

Seven women said either some or all of their conditions were related to the stress of being in the fishery or accidents that had occurred aboard the boat. Two women said

their arthritis and high cholesterol were inherited, two others said their high blood pressure and acid reflux were the result of their diets. Another two women said their arthritis was the result of their work in fish plants, and two others said they could not attribute their conditions to anything specific. One woman said her stomach ulcers resulted from stress during the moratorium and another woman said kidney disease was the cause of her urinary tract and kidney infections.

Eight women said they had been injured and/or developed conditions as a result of the stress related to the fishery or their work on fishing boats. Diagnosed conditions that women reported as being related to their work in the fishery include depression, arthritis, urinary tract infections, kidney infections, and acid reflux. Injuries were mostly to the back and hip and resulted from falls aboard the boat. Other injuries included cuts, twisted ankles, and contusions of the hands and legs. Only one woman had reported her injury to Workers Compensation. Another said she did not know that she had the right to report injuries to Workers Compensation and make a claim for compensation.

When women were asked, 'How often have you been depressed in the past eight years?' one woman said most of the time, five women said sometimes, six said occasionally and four said never. One woman said, "I don't get depressed. I don't have time (02-08). When asked, 'How long do these periods of depression normally continue?' most women said one to two days. Two women said their depression was caused by the stress of the fishery, two others said kids and finances were the source, and two others said they get a bit depressed around their periods. Others said their depression was caused

by the loss of a friend who drowned, sickness, focusing on sad things and the kids leaving.

Two women reported taking prescribed medication for depression.

As women in a male-dominated occupation, women are aware that their abilities as fish harvesters are often under scrutiny. In order to cope with this pressure to prove themselves capable of doing the work and the scrutiny, women sometimes downplay their injuries. The following excerpt illustrates this situation. First she says she has no injuries; then she talks about the time she caught her thumb between two boats; she then acknowledges that she felt she could not say anything about this to the male fish harvester who was beside her because of what he might think about her – as a woman in the fishery.

I: Have you ever been injured while working in the fishery?

FH: No, well, yes, I caught my thumb between two boats. The two boats were side by side. You should never keep your hand over the side of the boat when there's two boats together. I was talking to another lobster fisherman and here's me trying to be brave and not letting anybody know that I had my thumb squat and just putting up with the pain. I don't know why I did that. Well what a thumb I had on me. But I never told them and I don't know why I did that you know. I didn't want to cry and I kept it in and kept it in but after this other fishermen left, then I broke down and cried where [my husband] was to. He said, "What's wrong?" I wouldn't cry where the other fishermen was because I mean they'd think, "Oh, she a woman. It's no trouble to tell she got her finger stuck." He said, "No, you're a fish harvester and you should know what you're doing."

I did get hurt this [other] time when we were lobster fishing, when the boats are running off and the boat gives in to the swell. Well I was stood up and the next thing I remembers my two legs are straight up in the air and I lands up in the front part of the boat. [My husband] didn't panic but he said he saw me flying right through the air and he saw me land. He said I was lucky to land aboard the boat cause I could have gone overboard. I didn't move because I didn't know if I had broken anything. So I slowly started to move my arms and then my legs and then I was concerned about my back. To this day if it's dirty weather I get a pain in my back. I don't know if it's from that. I didn't feel any pain that day but I was pretty

stiff that night. Other than that there was no serious injury. That was something to remember. I gave myself a good shock. We're always banging legs and arms but that's not something that's going to come back at you years down the road.

I sort of twisted my foot getting in the boat one morning. Sometimes it's pretty slippery in the morning from the dew on the boat and you're wearing rubber boots. I caught myself and twisted my foot but now even to this day (and that happened the second year I was in the fishery) if the weather is dirty, a lump will come out on the side of my foot. I'd say that's where it happened. It's just little things that and I try to ignore them but eventually it comes back on us because in the fishery we take a lot of beatings aboard the boat when the boat is underway. I'm only thirty-six. Come back in ten years time and see what I'm like (01-01-08).

Urinary tract infections and kidney infections were identified as particularly important by a majority of women in this study. The high number of women reporting these conditions may be related to their not having access to toilet facilities while on the water. One woman had the following to say about this and a related visit to her doctor:

Not having access to a bathroom is also an issue. Even in the small boat it's a big issue for me. When we're lobstering there's a crowd around all the time. Usually what will happen is there's another boat that comes out from in here and there's another boat and we're fishing side by side with them. What happens is you don't pee. Personally, I don't pee. When I'm not fishing I pee about fifty times a day. When I'm fishing I don't pee. I developed kidney infections and I asked the doctor about it. He said, "It's just a mind set. Your mind will tell your kidneys not to pee because it's not appropriate to pee. It's not appropriate to take your clothes down or to take your clothes off because you got too much clothes on or there's males close by. Your mind conditions your body after awhile." And to be honest with you, I don't want to pee so I don't. But I can see what damage it's doing to me. Every year I get kidney infections, every year (01-04-06).

This concern about lack of access to a washroom was raised by women at other times during the interviews as well. For example, when asked: "Do you ever contemplate not going to work because you don't feel well?" One woman said once a week and three

women said once a week or less. Nine women said they never contemplate not going to work. However, one said,

Sometimes I do, but there's nothing I can do about this. I don't like being out there at that time of the month because you're out there for eight or nine or ten hours and you got no bathrooms to run to. I find that uncomfortable. And not going to the bathroom – I doubles up (02-07-09).

Women sometimes adjust their eating and drinking habits to compensate for the lack of toilet facilities. Some said they do not eat or drink before going on the water. Others said they get sick if they eat. The lack of washroom facilities is a stressor not experienced by the men on the boat. As the following woman explains, she does not feel comfortable using a bucket like the men. Here she describes the interaction with her husband on the issue:

We don't have anywhere to use the washroom on the boat – it's an open boat. I just wait until I get home. That's why I don't drink much tea or coffee when I'm going out. You can't. They have a bucket on the boat and [my husband] tells me to use it but I said, "If you thinks I'm sitting on a bucket out here in the open, forget it." Nothing is private. So I just wait until I get home. Now they don't have the boat tied on when I'm scrambling to get off it (01-02-12).

4.3 Conceptualizing Women's Health

Women's narratives about their health and the fishery show that they conceptualize their health relationally, linking it to factors at the environmental, institutional, household and individual levels. They describe their health in terms of fisheries management issues and practices that affect the fish stocks and their ability to earn a decent income. Their

health is also linked to their skill levels and their ability to keep themselves safe while fishing and their workload, particularly during the fishing season. It also relates to their relationship with their husbands and the level of support from others in their families and communities. Finally, their health is also linked to their personal health practices.

4.3.1 Connecting Fisheries Restructuring and Health

Although women wanted to talk mainly about the effects of restructuring on their families, I encouraged them to talk about their individual health. Early in her interview, the woman in the following excerpt says she has no health problems, but subsequently she describes fisheries policies and practices which are causing increasing stress, worry and uncertainty in her daily life. She describes a two-way process that includes the important role of fish harvesters themselves as well as government and other institutions in determining the health and sustainability of the fish stocks. She talks about the influence of large-scale institutions on fishing households and, in turn, the influence of those households and more particularly, the men in them, on decisions affecting the fishery. It is very interesting that she interprets the main problems in the fishery as, “too many people in too many channels with government, unions, fishermen.” The ‘problem’ she describes is at all levels – governmental, institutional, and individual.

[The fishery] is still not the greatest and to me it never will be. To me it's getting worse everyday. They're at the Sentinel fishery which goes out and brings in fish that they shouldn't even be catching. That's the way I feels about it now. If you can go out and bring in a nice amount of average fish and someone else is getting the same thing, then maybe you know it's

pretty safe. But when you're bringing in small fish, it's too small. See I blame a lot of this on government for some reason because we started off at 10,000 metric tons and then they put us up to twenty, and then they put us up to thirty. Then they cut us back to twenty. Now they're going to cut us back to ten. Instead of keeping us at ten for four or five years, then if it got better they could have graduated us up to fifteen. Why make the jump from ten to twenty to thirty?

You see what happens is you got so many things involved. You got the fishermen at the union, they want more fish so the union goes after the government to get more fish. Before you know it, you got quotas for fish but you got no fish because there's nothing there. For the sake of the resource they shouldn't be doing it. Conservation wise, that's a big thing for me. Because I don't know how many years [my husband] and me got left in this. We could have ten or fifteen years or maybe twenty years left if everything is alright but if they keeps destroying it and destroying it. ...

I mean our biggest concern is with lobsters. ... A small lobster to us it's our livelihood. For me to take that small lobster like I've seen people do and keep it and eat it, I mean that would be a crime to me because for me to take that small lobster it's like taking our livelihood. We looks after that land. We notches our lobsters. We keep records of how many lobsters we get per day and we keep track of spawning (egg bearing) lobsters. We keeps track of all that just so that our livelihood will stay intact.

But the fishery is going as quick as anything and its only easy to see because there's nothing there. The crab fishery is just about gone. They're just about down to the last one of them now. So you know what's going on: there's too many people in too many channels with government, unions, fishermen. Fishermen can't understand why they can't have this amount and that amount. They goes to the union and the union, getting pressure from the fishermen, goes to the government. That's what it's all about. We're going to lose the crab too.

Some fishermen are talking conservation measures now. We gets 10,000 lbs. [of crab] now as a permit. Some fishermen now in different communities are saying, "Cut it back to 5000 lbs. and leave it there for a space of so many years." Where we go to get our crab, I mean there's boats over there catching 100 to 200 lbs. of crab a day. That's nothing. ... It's destruction. And what about the shrimp? What's going to happen to that? The same thing. They go from one species to another: to take the

pressure off the cod they go to the crab, to take the pressure off the crab they go after the shrimp. Then they do the same thing with lobster.

And they opens everything at the same time in one shot so when it comes to the fishermen, you tell me about safety? We starts lobster fishing in April. The cod comes in May, the lump fishery comes in May. Here you are a fisherman trying to go at all those things because it's your livelihood, but you can't. We tried it. We had lobster traps in the water, we had lump nets out and we went at the cod fish. What happens is that something gets neglected. So we took in the lump nets and we took in the cod nets and we just stayed at the lobster this year. And the way that the government got so many rules and strict rules, they pushes so many fishermen. They pushes them and pushes them till something's going to happen They got a time limit on everything. You got to get your nets out of the water by 6:00 at night. What are you supposed to do when it's blowing and you got to get them in? You got to call the fisheries [DFO] and get a permit to leave them out because it's windy and you can't get out. There's too many things. I mean there's men who drowned trying to get the nets out of the water or trying to get the fish in in time. There's too much pressure put on fishermen. There's so many people involved in the fishery now. You got everybody – the companies – you don't know who to sell to or who gives the better price. There's so many things, it's unreal (01-01-17,18).

If I had to tell you all the times I gets tensed up, I have pain everywhere, stressed out, my shoulders and then I gets a headache. I tense up my shoulders because I'm always thinking. All mine lands right here (points to shoulders) (01-01-19).

Everything is stressful. Well, with the fishery – what's it going to be like from year to year? Is our livelihood going to be the same? Just hanging onto what we got, everything that we worked so hard for over the years because for us to lose everything now after all the years of working so hard, that would be devastating, let me tell you. That's why this cut to the cod quotas is such a big deal (01-01-20).

While she blames government for a lot of the problems with the fisheries in her area, she does not blame them entirely. She feels that the people involved in influencing decisions in the fishery at all levels need to look at what they are doing and think about their

behaviour, their responsibilities, and the way they interact. She can see the influence that all people and organizations, including fish harvesters have in the destruction of fish stocks. One example of this is the Sentinel fishery, which she clearly disagrees with.

In the feedback with women interviewed in this research, one women had another perspective on the role of these organizations, in particular, the union and its experimental Sentinel fishery.

I know there are fish harvesters who have a problem with the Sentinel fishery. Some see it as an unfair advantage – the Sentinel fishermen have an opportunity for employment that they don't [have]. Personally, I feel that without the push from our Union and the results of the Sentinel program, 3Ps wouldn't have had the cod fishery opened as soon as we did, after the moratorium.

The results from Sentinel show us age structure of our cod stocks, information on recruitment, and information on stock biomass. The Fisheries Resource Conservation Council (FRCC) takes the results of the Sentinel fishery into their assessments each year.

Before the moratorium and before Sentinel, we had no information from the inshore other than landings and research that was done offshore. Sentinel is an industry conducted scientific survey – something that fish harvesters are doing themselves. We've always said we didn't trust science. Well, Sentinel is one answer to that. Fish harvesters are doing the science work (01-04-s).

When asked if their lives were stressful at present, ten women said they would describe their life as somewhat stressful. Six women said that it was not at all stressful. When asked to compare the amount of stress they experience at present to their life before the moratorium, seven women said it is more stressful now, three said it is about the same and six said it is less stressful. Eight women said the fishery and three others said finances

are the main sources of stress in their lives. Four women said balancing home and work and the children were main sources of stress. One woman said she could not identify her main source of stress.

The uncertainty of the fishery is a major source of worry for many women in the study. When I asked, "What, if anything causes you excess worry, nerves or stress at home or outside of work in the past six months?" ten women said they were worried about "uncertainty about their future incomes" and five said they worried about "the future of their jobs." One woman said, "The main source of stress is the worry of what's going to happen next year. There's no such thing as worrying about today – you're always worrying months and months ahead – about finances mainly (01-02-17, 18).

When asked what causes them worry, nerves or stress *at work*, six women said the stressful nature of their work caused them worry and six women also said they worried about the children at home. Four women said too little time fishing, too much responsibility, and lack of support from their union causes them worry. Three women said they worried about other people at home, the changes in their job, and extended hours above normal at sea.

Women often went back to the beginning of the moratorium period to describe the beginning of their worry and stress from fisheries restructuring, job insecurity, loss of income and loss of control. These were and still remain today, constant stressors in their daily lives that are affecting their health and well-being. Most of the stress is a result of finding it harder to make ends meet in the restructured fishery. When asked, "Do you find

it harder or easier to make ends meet since the moratorium was called?" nine women said they find it harder to make ends meet now. All nine of these women work in open boats. The size of boat they use may be an important factor in their vulnerability in the restructured fishery, indicating a problem of 'fit,' as Newell and Ommer (1999, 364) describe it, between restructuring policies and the ability of inshore fish harvesters to earn a living. Four women said they find making ends meet easier now than before the moratorium and three of them work on 34'11" boats. Another woman who worked on a 34'11" boat said she found making ends meet to be about the same. Another woman could not respond because she was not fishing at the time of the moratorium and one other woman said they did not have a license for groundfish and therefore were not affected by the moratorium.

In the following excerpt, this woman describes how her health has been affected by the moratorium and the changes that have taken place since then. She describes the loss of control over fishing practices, financial stress, uncertainty, and constant worry about the fisheries that have affected her and her family's health and well-being:

FH: When they shut the fishery down, they shut it down in August. Well, we never had an EI claim open. We had nothing, no income whatsoever until November when they gave us \$1200. That's the first payment they gave us. I was thinking, "Sweet Jesus, we got Christmas coming. We got four kids to feed. We got clothing to buy and the bills – they don't stop coming." Well I mean that was the year I thought I'll end up in a mental institution so I won't know anything about it anyway. Maybe someone will take my kids and look out to them. You know you think about all of this and now I got one son in university. I'd like to help him more but I can't because if you have a good week this week you got to tuck a little bit away to have just in case you have a bad week next week. Because you don't get anything. If you don't get fishing, you don't get any money.

There's no such thing as a sick day, you know, you can't afford to get sick.

There's times when mentally and physically I'm wondering and wondering if they're going to cut the quotas and you're worrying about next year when you shouldn't be because you don't have the cod caught for this year and we're wondering if we're going to get enough for next year. If they cut the cod quotas we might be lucky if we get four weeks next year. How are you supposed to survive – you can't do it. I know one year – depressed wasn't the word. I didn't know – my God I got youngsters and how am I going to feed them? The big thing was getting used to this little bit of money we got on TAGS. I mean, we got through it I suppose – but I mean – how do you get through that? What do you sacrifice and give up?

I: Would you say your health has changed since you started working in the fishery?

FH: Yes definitely, definitely. I mean before we got in, I mean, well when I first got into the fishery at least, there was money to be made, and I mean there's money to be made now but it's just like I say, you can't go at it. But, there was never like a worry. There was never a worry. You knew when Thursday or Friday came and they issue your cheque, you knew you were gonna have a nice little week's pay. What else did you have to worry about?

They say money is not everything. It's not, but 99% of your problems are the result of not having money. One time I never wondered if I was going to have food on the table, if my kids were going to be clothed, if one of them needed to go see a doctor in Grand Falls, that wasn't a problem. I knew I could go and get a bit of money and take them in, buy them lunch for the day and it was a treat for them to go to Grand Falls. Now, my daughter has an appointment with an ear specialist. She had one last month and I have to take her in again this month. I was thinking, "My God, I hope we do good so that I can have the extra money to take her." I'll probably end up taking her on the bus so it's my fare and her fare but if my husband takes us in, that's three of us that have to be fed that day. We look at everything. One time it wasn't a problem. We would all get in the car and go and it was no big deal but now I have to say, "No, I'm sorry, you can't go. There's no money to take you," and they understand that. They're pretty good. Then they ask: "Can we have something special for lunch when we come home?" I say, "Yeah, we'll have a special lunch for you when you come home." That was fine, they understand that.

One time it wasn't a worry and it wouldn't be now if there was more time for the fishery, if it was open more. I know if they give an individual quota, we're going to take a big loss but you learn to adjust because you got your lobster and then we would do the cod, then we go at the crab. In between while your cod quota was there, you could go at it when you wanted to but right now even last year they opened the lobster and then the cod opened and then the lump opened and you had your crab on the go. Everything was on the go at the same time. You didn't know if you were coming or going or what you should be doing or what you should be at. We made the money, we did. We made good money. And I know if they give us an individual quota for cod it's going to be a big cut for us but it could be better in the long run. After a while, hopefully, if they do give us individual quotas and we got 20,000 pounds this year, maybe next year we could get 30,000 if it goes good. Each year you could build on it but going at it on your own time is the key so that you could fit it in between those rough spots when you got nothing.

Even this summer, there was the month of August – we had nothing. We finished fishing early July and then there was nothing again until September. We usually try to save the crab for the fall. This is how we try to work it out. We try to save the crab for the fall to hold us until the cod fishery opens so that you got a steady paycheque coming in for a while. Then by the time you get adjusted to that, it's all over and then you got to wait two weeks for your EI. Once you get it opened and get it on the go it's great. You learn to adjust. You do (01-02-7-9).

Like the previous woman, this woman frames her health primarily from the perspective of the family and children and the state of the fishery. The uncertainty surrounding the inshore fishery is compromising her (and her husband's) ability to provide for their family. At one time, taking care of her family's needs, putting food on the table, paying bills, taking the kids to Grand Falls to see the doctor "wasn't a worry" for her. In recent years, however, making a living and getting by has become a big worry.

Some of the fishery-related issues she discusses include not being able to fish for long enough, problems with overlapping fisheries when they are fishing, and not being able to catch their full quotas. She says they need to have the freedom to spread out the timing

of their catches so they are not trying catch two and three species at once in a small open boat, inevitably sacrificing part of their quotas, risking their safety, and going for long periods of time without an income especially in the summer months.

Later in the interview, I asked this woman if she could explain in more detail, the impact of all the changes on her individual health and she responded with the following:

It's the stress. You worry about the simplest little things in life that was never a concern to you before. I don't know if it's a reality check. You sort of step back and look at it and say, "If I had thought about this before." But then no one can predict the future but sometimes I think, "Where are we going to be five years from now? Is there going to be any fish left? Would I have done anything different?" Well, no, I couldn't because I didn't know. You can't look back on your mistakes – you got to go on. That's decisions in life and that's it (01-02-15).

The stress has taken its toll on me in every shape and form that it could. I'm full of arthritis so I got pain everywhere. Sometimes I get this terrible knot in my stomach that moves up. I know what it is and I say, "Get over it" and I push it aside. It got to the point where I went and got some drugs for it because I couldn't handle it. It's not so bad now. It's just that – the other night when [my husband] came home and told me that they're thinking about cutting the cod quotas again, I thought, 'Oh God no, don't tell me this is going to start all over again.' It just seems like it gets settled away and you get into a routine and boom – something hits you and you're right back at square one again. It's usually in my stomach and then it moves up and feels like it's going to choke me. It's anxiety. It affects me in every way possible. You don't function right in any area from the time you get up to the time you go to bed (01-02-17,20).

She says her health has been affected mainly by the financial stress resulting from their income instability since the moratorium and the restructuring of the inshore fishery. This is affecting her emotionally and has resulted in increased depression and anxiety.

4.3.2 Work Overload

It is well known that women's workload can have detrimental effects on their health (Health Canada, 1999, 57). Many women in this study said that their fishery work has become increasingly intensive, adding to an already heavy daily workload in the home, doing ground crew work, and helping others in their communities. One woman who has been fishing for twenty years said, "Well now I find it's more hectic than it was back then" (02-03-01). Even though they do not fish as many days as they did prior to the moratorium, there is more time spent gearing up and down and they have to stay on the water for longer periods of time each day. In work environments such as fishing where alertness is critical, fatigue and exhaustion can affect decisions as well as reaction and response times.

The sexual division of labour positions women in varying types of work situations and, for some women in this study, they have become responsible for increasing workloads that clearly can affect their health and well-being. As researcher Lesley Doyal explains, studying the health effects of women's work must include the effects of unpaid domestic work that women do in their homes and communities on a daily basis (1999, 22). When they are fishing, most women said they work eighty hours a week, while others who are not involved in ground crew tasks onshore, work sixty-five hours. When paid and unpaid work are combined, some women are working sixteen hours a day, seven days a week during the fishing season. This is an incredible amount of work.

Some women in this study were also responsible for caring work outside their homes. This is another important aspect of women's work overload. In addition to her heavy responsibilities at home, one woman described taking care of her sick mother: "I find it really hard when I'm fishing because I'm just so totally exhausted in the evening but I'm still expected to be there. ... It's like you're wanted everywhere and everyone has to have a little piece of you" (02-02-06). During the fishing season, this caring work is particularly difficult but women continue with it nonetheless.

Women were asked a set of health-related questions that may provide some insight into some possible effects of heavy workload on health. They were asked to rate their responses to a list of questions where one meant "most of the time," two meant "sometimes," three meant "occasionally," and four meant "never." When asked, 'How often do you feel tired during the day?' two women said most of the time, six said sometimes and eight said occasionally. When asked, 'How often do you feel short-tempered?' one said most of the time, four said sometimes, nine said occasionally and two said never. When asked, 'How often do you feel anxious?' seven women said sometimes, seven said occasionally and two said never. When asked, 'Are you able to relax?' eight said most of the time, two said sometimes, two said occasionally and four said never.

Women in this study indicated ways in which their health has been affected by their increasing workloads, especially during the fishing season. When asked: "How often do you feel so physically or mentally tired that you cannot really enjoy yourself?" four women said this was often the case. Four others said 'not very often.' Issues related to work

overload were a source of worry for eight women in the study. When asked: "What, if anything has caused you excess worry, nerves or stress *at home or outside of work* in the past six months?" five women said they worried about 'choosing between my needs and the needs of others.' One woman said, "They [her family members] always get their needs met" (02-02). Four women said, 'balancing home and work responsibilities' and three said having 'too much to do' was causing them worry. When asked: "What if anything causes you excess worry, nerves or stress *at work* in the last six months, six women said work being stressful and five said duties conflicting with one another and work tiring them physically and mentally were causing them worry. Four women said having too much responsibility was a source of worry, nerves or stress.

Clearly about half of the women interviewed feel their health is being negatively affected by the heavy workload they carry, especially during the fishing season. The greatest impact on their health results from the long work days and the conflicting pressures to be working as fish harvesters but also to maintain a household and provide care for children and extended family members. Due to the increased workload, working in the fishery has made their lives increasingly more stressful.

4.3.3 Health of the Fish Stocks

The physical environment is an important determinant of health, especially in resource-dependent communities. Sustainable development is a critical aspect of healthy physical environments, and is defined by the Report of the World Commission on the

Environment as:

a process in which the exploitation of sustainable resources, the direction of investment, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations (cited in Health Canada, 1999, 97).

If a balance does not exist between economic, social, and environmental goals, then the health of fish stocks and the health of people and entire communities may be placed at risk.

Women's experiences as wives, mothers, and fishery workers living in rural Newfoundland and Labrador have taught them the interdependence of the health of fish stocks and the health of fishing families and rural communities. Sometimes, women's concerns about aggressive harvesting practices go further than the effects on local households and communities. One woman talked specifically about the way lump fish is harvested, the impact on the fish stocks and links with hunger in other parts of the world.

I: So, you handle the lump fish, you separate the male from the female?

FH: Well the male you just throw back because there's no point in keeping the male. With the female, you save the female and you cut the belly and take the roe out and that's it. The female is done when we cut out the roe and then it's thrown away.

I don't like [the way we handle lump fish] very much. That's more or less destroying the fishery, really. We've been talking about getting something done with the lump fish, even if they would take it and make fish meal out of it but they haven't come up with anything yet, although I know they're working on it. I heard they're trying to extract the roe from the fish and put the fish back in the water without killing it but I don't think that will be ready anytime soon. They are experimenting with it though.

It's really sad that you got to throw away the fish where – I think about it because there's so much hunger in the world. Like, probably there's something that could be done about that in a way that could be sent to those countries. That's what I think about mostly. There's so much of it that's thrown away.

I: Is it an edible fish?

FH: Oh yes. There's a lot of people that eats it especially the male, the male fish is edible but for the female I don't know. I don't eat it. It don't appeal to me. But there's a lot of people who likes the male. I'm sure there's something could be done with it (02-03-02).

Throughout this research, many women took the time to explain to me in great detail the way they do their work on the water and the complex issues involved in fishing. Often they would correct me on assumptions I would make about how they do their work and interact with the fish stocks. When one woman told me that she checks the lobsters to see if they're spawning, I commented, "So, if they are spawning, then you throw them back." She replied, "No, we don't throw them back in – we gently puts them back in the water."

Women who have been fishing for many years, as is the case with the woman in the following excerpt, have been witness to the violence, greed and destruction that have threatened their livelihoods and the health of the fish stocks. As Julian Cribb says, they "bugger up one species then move onto the next" (cited in Leonie Stella, 1996, 192).

I: What do you think caused the decline of the groundfish?

FH: It was over-fished by the dragners. They're dragging up all the species in the area. The foreign boats have a by-catch that's bigger than the entire catch for this area – enough to keep two plants running. The ecosystem is ruined. What do the fish have to eat when the bottom is all tore up? There's too many foreign boats in here. They were dumping the flounder and now days you're supposed to bring all

your by-catch ashore. Nothing is supposed to be thrown away ...

In the early days they would set their herring nets early so they would have enough salted bait to do them for the lobster season. My belief is that the herring is gone now like the cod. One time there were lots of herring. That's the way it goes now – we have to buy our bait now because you just don't know whether or not you'll get any herring in your nets.

I: How should they have handled the cod fishery?

FH: When they closed the cod fishery they should have closed a lot of things – the draggers should not have been allowed a by-catch of cod. They should have waited a few years and started with a hook and line fishery, no gill nets. That's my thinking – that in three years, maybe five, they'll be buying up all the groundfish licenses that are left. Pretty soon there's not going to be any such thing as a commercial cod fishery. All there will be is a recreational fishery for tourists and a small food fishery.

It was the same with the salmon fishery. They closed the salmon fishery six to eight years ago with the intention of opening it back up when the salmon stocks increased but salmon continued to decline. I think the decline continued because the ecosystem was destroyed. The food that salmon normally fed off was gone (02-03-14,s).

The woman quoted above alludes to the political interference that inshore fish harvesters have been talking about for years – that government sides with dragger owners in most disputes concerning stock conservation. She believes that government blindly provides large quotas to draggers and foreign fishing boats, even if this means destroying breeding grounds and compromising the health of fish stocks. In her opinion, the cod fishery was destroyed by the draggers and during the moratorium, “the draggers should not have been allowed a by-catch of cod. ... the foreign boats have a by-catch that's bigger than the entire catch for this area – enough to keep two plants running.”

Many women interviewed said they pay close attention to fisheries management and conservation practices. They are aware of the political interference at all levels that works against proper management of the stocks. The woman quoted above explained that during the moratorium, "they should have closed a lot of things. ... They should have waited a few years and started with a hook and line fishery"(02-03-14,s). Instead, she said, "They opened a Sentinel fishery," an experimental cod fishery operated by the FFAW union.

In the interviews women talked about a number of ways their daily work intersects with fishery sustainability. Many of them described the importance of conservation measures and how they and their husbands take these measures very seriously. Even women who work from small open boats and who struggle to catch their quotas still make sure that conservation measures are upheld.

You got to measure the crab and lobster and if it's too small you throw it back. That's great because you know it's going to be there for another year. That's not a problem. But the thing is trying to get the quota caught, some of them just go but you say "no" and throw them back in (01-02-11).

At times, women do not approve of what other fish harvesters are doing to damage the environment and thereby threaten their livelihood in the fishery. One woman speaks about the personal measures she and her husband took to protect the lobster stocks. Sometimes these measures involve confronting other fish harvesters with regard to obeying the rules and regulations that are in place. As this woman says, "if we play by

the rules, so do they.”

I think our side [of the bay] got abused a lot – when you’re here getting thirteen small lobsters in your trap and you’re throwing them all back in. The next year you’re only getting one or two so you asks yourself, “Well, where’s all those small lobsters to?” That’s why we don’t like change right because you can tell when people takes stuff illegally. You can tell the difference. I mean what happened to those thirteen lobsters that all of a sudden they’re gone? Then you got to have a talk with those people because we don’t put up with anything like that. We tells them what we’re seeing, something different and well how come. And the Warden, he’s good too. He keeps an eye on them. He caught them already.

It’s always something right but the small ones are our livelihood. ... We welcome anybody here but they’re starting to abuse it. They’re taking it out of our families mouth and they can’t say they don’t do it if they got caught. We go by the rules and where the hell is buddy getting off coming in and cleaning fish on the beach? We’re not allowed to do that and they comes and does it. We don’t go along with that. They got to go by the rules – if we play by the rules, so do they (02-08-11).

4.3.4 Loss of Control and Increasing Pressures to Take Risks

Women interviewed compare fishing practices before the moratorium with current practices and weigh out what works and what does not – for them, their families and communities, and the fish stocks. One major aspect of the change they described is the loss of freedom (or control) over fishing. Their describe inshore fishing at present as a low control high demand situation which is well recognized as having negative consequences for worker’s health and well-being (Love *et al.* 1997: 6; Heaney, 1993, 196).

When women talk about loss of control, they do so with a sense of the broader historical context that takes into consideration effects on their safety on the water, the

increased stress involved in making a living, and the increased levels of uncertainty in their lives: "Before the moratorium when we fished cod, we didn't get much for our fish but we caught more and the freedom was there. There was always something for us to go at. Now we don't know what we're going to be doing from year to year. There's so much uncertainty" (02-03-15). Their greatest source of frustration is from the increasing pressure of new rules, regulations, and restraints imposed on them by local fisheries and government organizations.

The degree of control women have in their personal work environments is also an important influence on their health and well-being. Women were asked to say whether they agreed or disagreed with four statements: 'I am in control of my health,' 'I have influence over the speed at which I work,' 'I have influence over my health at work,' and 'I have influence over my safety at work.' Most women agreed with: 'I am in control of my own health.' Four women disagreed and twelve agreed with the statement, 'I have influence over the speed at which I work.' Four women disagreed and twelve agreed with the statement, 'I have influence over my health at work.' Two women disagreed and fourteen agreed that they have influence over their safety at work.

Women's relationship with their husbands, their learning, the size of boat, the length of time they have spent fishing, and fisheries management policies and practices all seem to influence their perception of the amount of risk they are taking. Dealing with increasing pressures to take risks is stressful for many women in this study, regardless of the size of their boats. Many women challenge their husbands concerning their risk-taking

behaviours and some refuse to take unnecessary risks. For example, some women in smaller boats and dories¹ will not fish crab precisely because they do not feel safe going out such long distances where it takes longer to come ashore in bad weather.

He ... only got a temporary crab license. I've only been with him crabbing a couple of times because it's too dangerous in the dory for me – I find it. Not only that but it's too dangerous period in a dory for crab. But the men, they're doing it because they want to make that extra thousand dollars and that's understandable when you got a poor season. Most of the temporary crab licenses are kind of off-shore right and it is a dangerous game I'm telling you. I was only out a few times and I told [my husband] that I don't want to be in the dory. My life is too valuable for that. We go out ten miles and we only have one motor. When you get a fifteen or twenty mile an hour wind coming upon you and you got a string of traps out – the crab pots come aboard fast too. They're not like lobster pots. It's dangerous in the dory (02-010).

The woman in the following excerpt fishes in a 34'11" boat and she says at present, they are going out too far for cod.

In September we weren't quite so lucky because we didn't get any cod fish because there wasn't many in our bay. They had to go a long ways off St. Pierre. [My husband] went out twice but he didn't get anything. I didn't go. I mean where the boat is so small they got to be watching the forecast. Right now I mean with a 34'11" boat, that's too small to be out there right. I mean where everything is so tight now, you're only allowed to get this much fish in this time slot and you're almost drove to go to where the big boats are in order to get the fish (01-01-07).

When asked: "How often do you take risks to get your job done?" two women said they always take risks, five said they take risks sometimes, three said they rarely do, and six women said they never take risks. I wanted to know if the size of boat and the

¹A dory is a traditional Newfoundland inshore fishing boat with a flat bottom, wide sides and a sharp bow and stern.

distance they go out on the water might affect their perception of risk. It makes sense that working from an open boat could involve more risk than working from a 34'11" boat with a cabin. Similarly, working close to shore can provide a greater degree of protection from bad weather than working farther offshore simply because they have a shorter distance to go to get off the water.

The two women who said they *always* take risks fish from open boats; one fished from a boat with only one motor. The five women who said they *sometimes* take risks also fish from open boats, although two of them fish some species from 34'11" boats. All these women go further offshore for crab. The three women who said they *rarely* take risks also work from open boats. Two of them have been fishing for almost twenty years. The six women who said they *never* take risks have been fishing from three to nineteen years and they fish from both open and 34'11" boats. Interestingly, the one woman who said she does not wear a life jacket also said she never takes risks to get her job done.

Women's perception of risk in their jobs as fish harvesters is subjective, shifting, and often reflects their social position as 'helper' on the boat. Their often subordinate position means they have less control over decisions affecting their health and safety and are more at risk of increased worry, stress, illness and injury. It is usually the husbands who are in control and operate the boats even when women have some input into decisions related to safety. Women rarely have opportunities to learn to operate the boat independently and perceptions of skill interact with perceptions of risk. Over time, as they have learned more about fishing, their comfort levels and competency have increased and

their perception of risk has shifted and changed. The two women who have been fishing for almost twenty years said they rarely take risks, and one of these women said, "There's times probably when we do [take risks] but we don't consider them risks. Probably we would do things one time that we wouldn't think about doing now because back then you didn't know the difference" (02-03-08).

For some women, their narratives surrounding risk may be more of a reflection of the degree of risk in the occupation in general or the amount of risk that their husbands take while on the water, rather than anything specific to the work women do aboard the boats. These understandings of risk, which are very different than my initial gender-neutral conception of risk, have historical and social meanings that are different for men and women fish harvesters. It is obvious among many of the women interviewed that they are not comfortable with the degree of risk in the occupation, or the macho attitude among both fishermen and fisheries management that promotes increased risk-taking. Many women challenged their husbands on their risk-taking behaviours, especially in relation to safety and going out or staying out in bad weather.

4.3.5 Safety Practices on the Water

In her book *Risks, Dangers, and Rewards in the Nova Scotia Offshore Fishery*, Marian Binkley explains that worker's safety aboard fishing boats is highly influenced by the effects of fisheries restructuring that has resulted in numerous social and economic constraints on the work of fish harvesters (1995, 120). In this thesis, women fish

harvesters described a number of factors that are affecting the safety of inshore fishery workers. These include going out further for crab in small open boats, fishing multiple species at one time, staying on the water for extensive periods of time each day and during bad weather, the use of and practices associated with gill nets, and lack of training. These factors that affect women's safety on the water are a source of worry and stress. When women were asked to select from a list of things that may be causing them excess worry, nerves or stress *at work* in the last six months, eight women said they worried about being injured at sea. One woman qualified her response with: "I don't worry about being injured at sea. I worry about dying at sea" (02-02-05).

Many of the issues raised during the interviews with women eventually resulted in discussions about safety on the water. For some women, safety was *the* central focus of their work. One woman who believes that fishing comes second to safety had the following to say when I asked her about the kinds of skills needed to do her job on the water.

Keeping steady. You got to be fast. You got to know what you're doing. As with lobster, you got to measure the lobster and make sure it's the right length before you puts the bands on the claws. You got to be fast at that and the boat is still going and it might be windy and you're trying to keep your balance and the lobster is trying to bite you. I'm always cutting bait in the boat because sometimes we run short of bait and it might be a bad day so you got to have skill with your hands. That's one thing.

You always got to be watching. I know with me I'm always watching ahead because as soon as the pot is thrown out into the water again and I might have lobsters crawling around at my feet, but I got to watch ahead because there might be something floating in the water that we could run into. I'm always looking ahead where I'm up in front. I got to make sure

there's nothing there, making sure there's no other boats coming up because [my husband] can't always see and there could be a boat that came up while he was doing other things. So I double check to make sure there's nothing there. So, I points out where the next buoy is so he knows where the next pot is. There's a lot of those different things. You'd be surprised. For you to go aboard the boat, there's a lot of those things that you wouldn't even notice me doing but they're an everyday part of my life when I'm out on the water. I'm constantly 'looking' on the water to see what's around or to see if there's other boats having trouble. There's a lot of little things that I look out for. The other lobster fishermen has ropes on their buoys on the water so I try to watch for that so it don't get wound up around our gear. My husband gives me the lobster to measure and band and then it got to go in the box and he might get two or three in each pot and I'm looking to see if there's anything around and he's going to another pot. It's continuous, and you got to be really alert when you're on the water – protection for yourself and safety for yourself and for other people too (01-01-11).

Our discussions about safety eventually came around to the things that individual fish harvesters can do to increase their safety on the water. For the women in this study, this involves wearing life jackets, listening to the weather forecast, being careful, and getting off the water in rough weather. When I asked one woman about staying out fishing after it got dark, she said:

I don't worry about stuff like that. I'd worry if my husband went out by himself but when I'm with him I don't worry because I know I'm there and he's there for me. If you worry about it, you wouldn't be able to fish. I can't get up and look out on the water and usually when it starts up and we're on the water a breeze will come up, I can't say, "Oh my God, I'm out there, what if we drowned." I just can't think that way. So we go out and we take it day by day. We're careful. We got a lot of kids depending on us so we don't take any foolish risks. If a breeze comes up we go home. If it calls for wind then we don't go out. That's all we can do (02-08-05).

As fishery workers, some of these women are using their influence to promote more safety-oriented behaviours among the male fish harvesters they work with on the water. This is one area where they feel they can and must exert some control. Although at one time, it was common for children from fishing families to grow up without a father, many of the women in this study will not take the risk that their children will have to go through life without a mother *or* a father. They will do whatever they can to make sure that does not happen. One woman said she felt that having more women fish harvesters was a good thing precisely because they are more conscious of safety issues.

FH: I believe there should be more women fisherpersons because I think women are more aware of safety than men.

I: What makes you think that?

FH: Because they are. They are more conscious of things like wearing your life jacket.

I: Do you always wear yours?

FH: Yes I do.

I: Does [your husband] wear his?

FH: He does now but he used to throw it up in the bow of the dory and leave it there. But I said, "No, you're a good fisherman and you're a good swimmer but that don't mean you can't get thrown overboard." I believe the men laugh at the women really but I keep telling [my husband]: "This is the way it should be." He'll toot at me and I'll say, "You know if we had more women we could change the fishery." It would make it a safer fishery, but then they got more experience than any woman I know of unless someone's been at it for twenty-five years.

I don't know if they're careless or if they take their job for granted, that they know it so well that they think everything is going to run smooth anyway with the rope down under your feet. You kind of think, 'Well, you can get snarled up in that and

go overboard you know.' When you're sitting up on the bow tot and you're looking down at him and you're watching him doing his work with cod especially, because I've helped him haul in nets and like the nets have got caught in my jacket. I says, "Oh my God." I kind of panics. He says, "Don't worry about it. I got the slack," and just like that it comes out, but then I panics. We got these things on our life jackets and they're a problem. There should be something more inventive than that. But he laughs at me when I says stuff like that (02-010-06).

Some women are carefully watching what the men are doing, especially in the area of safety aboard the boat. Most are very conscious of safety issues and some say they alone enforce safety protocol. All the women but one said they wear life jackets whenever they are fishing. Most of them have been wearing life jackets since they started fishing but one who has been fishing for eight years said she started wearing hers after she almost drowned a couple of years ago. The one woman who does not always wear her life jacket said: "We keep them in the boat. Sometimes when you're working, the life jackets are so bulky" (02-06-03). Another woman complained about the floater suits she and her husband were wearing:

The problem is that they're not waterproof so on rainy days you still got to wear oilskins. At times in bad weather you get soaking wet with them on so you take them off. [My husband] don't like wearing his because he gets wet and cold. They should have been made waterproof (02-04-02).

Women described ongoing attempts to try and convince their husbands to wear their life jackets. In some cases, it has taken women years to convince them that they should wear the jackets. One woman who has been fishing with a crew for ten years describes below how she has tried over the years to encourage the men to be more safety conscious. She said her husband, father and brother-in-law have only started wearing their

life jackets in recent years. In the following excerpt she describes how the men around her consider wearing life jackets to be an admission of fear in their work that will erode their nerve. Wearing a life jacket is metaphorical for male fish harvesters because it means letting go of some aspects of a male work culture that visibly promotes high risk-taking and many of them resist this. Women have not been part of the construction of the work culture on the water and, therefore, do not have the same type of investment in it.

FH: [My husband] got a nerve. I'll tell you what it was like with [my husband] and them. The men didn't have no fear. Little things that I would see to be cautious about it didn't mean anything to them. All these years I've been fishing with [my husband] I've pointed out so many things. One day he said to me, "You're going to have my nerve gone!" because I do point it out. I makes him wear his life jacket. He didn't wear his lifejacket and he can't swim. I can swim but he can't and he fell overboard twice now and he was lucky enough that someone went and got him. I wears a life jacket. I wears one of those full jackets. I had to get [my husband] one with the cartridges and make him wear it because for the distances we got to go and the amount of times we've encountered wind with no warning. But now he knows, that's one good thing about it. I've made him aware of the things that goes on. My father and my brother-in-law wear their life jackets.

I: Did they always or is this something that they recently started doing?

FH: No, fishermen fished in open boats and believe me I've been around long enough to know that they never did. Some friends of ours who fish nearby also wear life jackets. It's better to be safe than sorry and if you do go overboard with your lifejacket, we always travel in pairs so someone would come along and pick you up. My husband would panic because he's so afraid of water and I've made him wear it – it's three years that I've made him wear his life jacket. It's unbelievable. If I only had a video camera of all the things that happened to us. It makes you grey, I can honestly say that (01-01-03).

The woman in the following excerpt talks about taking responsibility for safety training with the crew. This involves such things as wearing safety gear and making sure

the boat meets current safety regulations.

FH: There's not enough safety training and it's a concern because it's only me doing it with [my husband], trying to make them aware of things.

I: Are you saying that all the education around safety training is coming from you?

FH: Yes, a lot of it. They know the Coast Guard is there but not all the time and they can go and get booklets from DFO, but DFO and the RCMP go out and check to see if you have certain things. In the last few years they've really forced the need for flares and you have to have a fire extinguisher aboard the boat. Last year we had to go and buy a life ring – not as big as the one that goes on the big boats, just something that you can throw and grab into to tow someone back in. I think there should be a few more workshops on safety because I'm doing it and my husband and I know a few other boats that are paying attention to it but I see a lot of things – not wearing the life jackets and they say they won't wear them because they're too uncomfortable wearing them on the boats.

We need more workshops. They don't have them here and every year there's new things coming in. Last year I went up to DFO fisheries and asked them if there was any changes in what we needed on the boat because a couple of times in the past we went out and didn't know about it. We didn't get a fine but we got a warning. So every year now I goes to DFO and asks them if there's any changes in what we need aboard the boat (01-01-09).

Another woman explained that fish harvesters' drinking alcohol on the water was also a big concern for her:

FH: Drinking on the water is a high concern because I mean they shouldn't be going on the water.

I: Do you see a lot of that going on?

FH: Quite a bit of it. When we goes fishing there's always two or three boats together and we're more or less looking out for each other. Like we're always watching the boat that's beside you. A lot of drowning happens through carelessness (02-011-03).

4.3.6 Violence Against Women

According to the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, violence is:

any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such act, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (cited in Status of Women Canada, 1995, 42).

Three different dimensions of violence directly targeted at women came to my attention during this research: women being forced to remain working on fishing boats, physical violence aboard the boat, and the psychological abuse of being stigmatized. The first situation involved a woman I interviewed who, while telling me that she wanted to end her work aboard the boat, was very quickly told by her husband that she would stay on the boat for as long as he was there. It became clear to me that this woman was likely not going to be able to carry out the decisions she had made to protect her health, even though her physical health was deteriorating. She was going to have to stay working on the boat whether she wanted to or not.

Attitudes that reinforce women's subordinate position in society are often transferred to the workplace in a variety of ways (Status of Women Canada, 1995, 50). In the interviews, examples of such attitudes were evident in the segregating of women to certain tasks on the boats, resulting in women being unskilled in critical areas of fishing work and constantly dependent on men. This can impact on their ability to be safe while fishing, to secure an income over the long-term, and to develop their capacity to be

autonomous human beings. These all have implications for their physical and emotional health and well-being. I think this is what one woman was talking about when she said, "Having a good job in the fishing boat comes right down to whether you got a good relationship at home basically. If you're blessed to have that, it's a little different than if you're not."(01-04-04)

During the interviews, I asked women if they would indicate the frequency with which their job exposed them to a range of possible situations and conditions. One of the conditions was 'violence in the workplace' and most women responded that they were not exposed to violence. However, one woman spoke about the way her friend was treated aboard the boat by her husband and the silence surrounding issues of abuse:

Personally, I'm not concerned about this for me but I am concerned about it for other women. ... It is a high concern. ... one woman I know who's not fishing now – she's got back problems now – she had a stigma attached to her because she didn't all the time go in the boat either but that didn't make her work any less than mine. She and her husband had a bad relationship to start with – he drank and he still does. I remember her telling me that he got pissed off one day and started the engine up and put it in full steam ahead and she fell back in the boat. So if they got a bad relationship on shore, it's a nightmare out there. It can be really dangerous, but they got no other choice. But we don't talk about this much amongst ourselves (01-04-12).

An important aspect of violence relates to the general stigmatizing and surveillance that women in the fishery have to endure from people in their communities, in government, and institutions. Many women may be negatively affected in a variety of ways by discourses about women that stigmatize and undervalue their work, and their right and need to earn an income from the fishery. These affect women's reputations,

their position in the community, their self-esteem, and their ability to address all sorts of issues in their workplace. These have many implications for their health and well-being.

The stigmatizing and surveillance that women are currently experiencing in the fishery should be understood, in part, as a general resentment by people outside the fishery to a different structure for accessing EI within the fisheries. Secondly, the stigmatization needs to be understood as part of a trend in the targeting of women in restructuring processes where, in this case, women are viewed as abusers and undeserving of the benefits of social programs. Restructuring can have the effect of creating new definitions of criminal behaviour as recipients of social programs are 'watched' more closely as the programs themselves are made more and more restrictive. As researchers in Britain found, policies on employment, taxation, and social programs that were restructured during the Thatcher years increased women's poverty and had the added effect of, "criminalizing a large number of women who use the programs" (Pantazis, 1999, 103). The treatment of women fish harvesters in the local media as defrauders and abusers of the EI system is evident in the following excerpt from a CBC broadcast entitled 'Hand Up or Hand Out,' which aired throughout Atlantic Canada during the evening news on November 6th, 2001.

CBC Reporter: There are just as many fishermen drawing Unemployment Insurance as before the shutdown nearly ten years ago.

Fisherman: The big problem with the fishery today is the EI system because while the EI system is structured the way it is, there's going to be more come in.

CBC Reporter: Employment Insurance didn't lure Gerard Chidley and his son into

the fishery. When the cod fishery shut down they started fishing crab. They fish seven months a year but if they wanted to, they could go on fisherman's EI after just two days fishing crab because fisherman's EI is now based on how much you make not on how long you work. And crab fetches top dollar.

Gerard Chidley: The money is good money. There's a high return so you don't have to spend as much time on the water.

CBC Reporter: Crab is the new king of the fishery. The Newfoundland fishery has tripled in value over the past ten years. It now brings more than half a billion dollars a year into the provincial economy. Just six days of fishing crab, and all of Chidley's crew could qualify for EI but these guys don't stop. Some do. You start losing EI benefits once you make \$49,000 a year. Gerard Chidley says that tempts people to try to beat the system.

Gerard Chidley: There might be two people in the fishing boat but there might be four people drawing fishermen's unemployment because basically they got a fishing license but they're not aboard the boat.

CBC Reporter: Sometimes it's done to keep money in the family. HRD statistics show that one in five people now fishing is female. Many women do fish but just ask people in rural Newfoundland and Labrador if they believe it's as many as one in five.

Male Fish Harvester: I don't believe it. Like I said, I'd have to see it to believe it. I worked on a crab boat for eleven years and I've yet to see a woman.

Another Male Fish Harvester: I know there's women who do fish. I know some but the vast majority have never been aboard a boat. And everybody in those communities know it.

CBC Reporter: From one tip of the province to the other people will tell you quietly how some fishermen are beating the system. Allan Williams retired from the fishery seven years ago and he's disgusted with the abuse. ...

It is important to note that women fish harvesters were not interviewed by CBC

for this series. Nor was there any acknowledgment that most women are located in the small boat inshore fishery where work is much more seasonal and workers make

considerably less than in the midshore and offshore sectors. Small boat inshore fishing families are most vulnerable and in need of a second income to stay above the poverty line and provide for their families. It is highly unlikely that one of their 'worries' might be that they could make more than \$49,000 a year!

Due to the restrictive and discriminatory EI regulations, some fishing families have encountered difficulties with compensating women for their fishery-related work. The discourse surrounding Fisheries EI in Newfoundland and Labrador often positions women fish harvesters as abusers of the EI system. This aspect of their work lives that many women have to confront, whether or not they fish, can have negative repercussions for their health and well-being.

Fisheries and EI policies affect the lives of women and fishing families in unexpected ways and can sometimes undermine women's integrity by forcing them into situations that may have detrimental effects on their physical and emotional health. However, it is not women's moral character that needs to be questioned with regard to their access to EI. Instead, it is the moral nature of restrictive and discriminatory EI policies that continuously work to disenfranchise women. Susan Babbitt reminds us that "some social structures are of the wrong sort altogether for some individuals to be able to pursue personal integrity and that questions about the moral nature of society need to be asked first before questions about personal integrity can properly be raised" (1996, 117).

4.3.7 Personal Health Practices

Personal health practices are another important determinant of health. However, like all the other health determinants, it is highly influenced by other factors such as gender, income, employment, and supportive environments. One woman who has been fishing a long time had this to say about how she takes care of herself during the fishing season.

FH: I'm fortunate that I don't have any health problems but I think, you know, you got to look after yourself, too.

I: What do you do to look after yourself?

FH: Well I dress warm when it's cold. I always did wear a cap. I try not to get exposed to the sun so I don't get sunburned and stuff like that. In the summertime when it's warm you got to wear rubber clothes out there anyway regardless of whether it's warm or cold. And I always wear off-season stuff – I always wear gloves so for that part I'm protected from the cold in a way. It's rarely that my hands will get cold unless it's a really cold day. I tend to keep working to keep myself warm so in that way I look out to myself and probably that helps. And if it's really too cold we'll come ashore because if I find it cold he finds it cold and we'll come ashore. It's a number of years now and I'm really aware of what is good and what is bad. I try to eat properly. Now I slip once in awhile but I try to eat good things (02-02-12).

In the interviews, I asked women a number of questions about their individual health practices such as sleeping patterns, activities undertaken to help reduce stress, physical exercise routines, and smoking and alcohol consumption. Six women said they sleep six hours or less each night. One woman said that she could not sleep at night at all. Six other women said they sleep for seven to eight hours each night and four others said they sleep from nine to ten hours a night. Six women said they have trouble sleeping:

four said this happens once a week or less, and two said they have trouble more than once a week. Six women said they wake up in the early hours of the morning and three said they worry about things before getting out of bed. Four women said they take medication to help them sleep. Three of these women took medication two to three times a week and one takes it two to three times a month.

When asked, "What kind of activities help reduce stress in your life?" women reported doing a variety of activities such as walking, aerobics, gardening, visiting with neighbours, spending time with the grand kids, crafts, being on the water, hunting, reading, and playing darts and bingo. Most women said they had the opportunity or energy to do these things. Getting away is increasingly difficult for some women and their families. As one woman said, "We're not as free now like when we want to go on vacation, it's not there" (01-02-15).

A number of women talked about the importance of building up their physical strength because additional muscle strength is needed in their work during the fishing season. One woman said that during the winter she lifts weights three times a week to prepare for the fishing season. Many women said they get physically stronger during the fishing season: "You're in the fresh air all the time and I could run up the beach and I wouldn't run out of breath. ... You get muscles everywhere that you don't even know you got" (02-08-07).

Looking more closely at vigorous physical exercise, three women said they exercise more than five times a week for fifteen minutes at a time, three said they exercise

from three to five times a week, and three others said they exercise one to two times a week. One woman said she exercises less than once a week and six women said they never do vigorous exercise.

Seven women reported drinking alcohol, although most said this was only on social occasions. Eight women said their husbands drink alcohol but most of them said this was usually confined to social occasions. Eight women said they smoked cigarettes. They began smoking in their early teens and currently smoke an average of sixteen cigarettes a day. Seven women said their spouses smoked.

4.3.8 Health Services

Another important aspect of being able to care for themselves as women workers and to care for their families is access to appropriate health services. Restricted access to appropriate health services can compromise people's health and independence. It is also a well-known stressor. I was interested in the quality and accessibility of health services in the rural communities where these women live so I asked them if they felt the health services were adequate. Nine women said they felt they were not adequate. Even women who said the services were good usually qualified this with, "good for what they got to work with." Most women talked about under-staffing, lack of particular services and increased difficulty with getting appointments. In one area, a new hospital had recently been built but as one woman pointed out:

The government haven't put people there to do the work. For example there's no facilities for women to have babies. 'We got a brand new health care facility, state of the art with no more services than we had in that old building over there. If you break a limb you got to go to Gander. ... It's a new health care facility that all politicians can take credit for putting there. It's something you can see, right, but it's put there to match a downgraded service. There's no more services than there ever was, probably less. 'You still got to wait a week for an appointment just to be sent up to Grand Falls (01-04-22).

In addition to the long waits for appointments and lack of services, many women also described having to deal with physician turnover or a total absence of doctors in some of their rural areas. One woman who had had four doctors over the previous eight years said she does not like what is happening with the health care system: "I find the doctors don't have that much time for you now anyway because they're so busy. They got fifteen minutes for you and you got to ... find out what's wrong with you in that space of time. Basically, I can live with it, I guess" (02-03-12). Another said:

There's nothing out here and we got to go into Stephenville for everything. Then if you go in there, well we don't have many doctors here anymore. It's not good. We had a couple of women doctors here and you just get to see them and they're gone again. It would be really nice to have a woman doctor around here. I'm after changing doctors that much I got none to go to now. I don't know who to go to anymore. Like there's one doctor I went to for four years when I was having the kids but see you go there and you have to wait two or three hours to get in so I gave him up and I started going to a woman doctor who was here but she left. Then I started going to another woman doctor and she left too. So I don't know who to go to anymore. If I get really sick I'll have to go to a hospital (02-05-09).

Women's access to and use of health services is also affected by the fact that none of them have a health insurance plan that would reimburse them for prescription drugs, physiotherapy, and other health requirements not covered under the Newfoundland and

Labrador Medical Care Plan.² While most women in the study have sought medical advice for pain, injuries and conditions they have developed, many of them said they really do not visit the doctor much, not even for regular pap smear tests. One woman who does not go for regular check-ups, said, "I've been to the doctor. I went once in the past five years" (02-10). One obvious reason they do not visit their doctors is that many women said they feel healthy. This may explain, at least in part, why they do not visit their doctors very much. However, another major reason may be access and the fact that they have to pay the full cost of prescriptions. As the following excerpt shows, some women visit their doctors but then do not get their prescriptions filled.

I had to pay everything myself and I've had prescriptions in my purse sometimes for five weeks and I haven't been able to get them – the pills that I'm supposed to take for the arthritis. As long as you can tolerate a bit of pain, I don't see any reason to take the pills. Any kind of pill is a drug. I think I have a low estrogen level but my doctor doesn't want me taking pills for it. At least not yet. They're expensive too (02-09-09).

Sometimes doctors give sample packets of drugs to patients who do not have insurance coverage. One woman in the study was given samples of a drug by her doctor when she injured her knee. However, like other women in this study, she is resistant to taking medication.

²The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Medical Care Plan (MCP) covers the following general medical services for residents of the province: visits to a physician's office; surgical, diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, including anaesthesia; pre and post-operative care; maternity care; radiology interpretive services; and certain medically required surgical-dental procedures performed in a hospital by a dentist or an oral surgeon (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Health and Community Services, <http://www.gov.nf.ca/mcp/html/mcp.htm>).

FH: He gave me three boxes. I thought I had a lot of medication but there was only two pills in each box so I had six pills.

I: Did you take them?

FH: No, I don't know. I might have some left yet. I don't like -- I'm not into that kind of stuff unless there's an accident (02-07-08).

Most women were concerned about not having a health plan, although as noted above, some of them have found ways around this, possibly to the detriment of their own health. Other women have health conditions that do not leave them with a choice about whether or not to take medication. One woman with a kidney disease spends \$200.00 a month on drugs.

Women are aware that the cost of drugs is likely going to increase as they get older and, therefore, they have been raising the issues of health and pension plans with their union. As the following woman explains, "What I think about is that most people who are unionized have a pension and a health plan but we don't have any of that" (02-03).

I'm one of the persons who mentioned it to the Union many times, about things like that. It's like the health plan. ... If something happens to one of us, we got to pay for everything and I did mention that to the Union many times but nothing's come out of it yet. They did mention last year that they were working on something, some kind of health plan for the fisher people ... and, like, for a pension plan, too, I did mention it to them many times but sometimes I wonder why I'm fighting for it because I don't think it's going to do us any good because we're getting at that age now, even if they did create a pension plan, it wouldn't be much good to us now. But the health plan probably would do us good anyway because as you get older you tend to get more medical problems. We've been lucky so far, you know, we've never had anything seriously wrong with us (02-03-06).

This past few years the union has been saying that it is negotiating a health plan but, "When they negotiates this, they say that they would take the cost of it off the amount we get for fish." Perhaps for this reason, other fish harvesters do not see the benefits of having a health plan. This woman says she has encountered some resistance from them: "They say that for everything we get, we lose part of our income. Everything that's brought up costs more" (02-03).

Gender may be an issue with regard to fish harvesters having a health insurance plan because women are greater users than men of the health care system. However, it should be noted that the implied over-use of health care by women is part of a discourse that structures women's health around frequent visits. It is also important to understand the links between frequent visits by women and the intense medicalizing of pregnancy combined with the professionalization of medicine as primarily a male occupation.

Nonetheless, women tend to live longer than men with more chronic health problems. Male fish harvesters may be resistant to a health plan simply because they do not use the health care system to the same extent and therefore do not see it as a priority. This may also explain why the fisheries union does not seem to be pursuing it in a timely manner.

In the feedback discussions with women interviewed, one woman agreed with the importance of health and pension plans, but she also said that it will likely remain up to women fish harvesters to pursue these issues with the union. She said that it would be very unlikely that men would insist that health and pension plans be put in place.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has explored some general issues concerning the relationship between restructuring, women's health and their occupational health and safety. I have established some links between fisheries restructuring and its effects on women's physical and emotional health as fish harvesters. Their concept of health and the inter-related factors that influence their health and well being emerge progressively from their experiences, as presented in their narratives. Their concept of health encompasses a range of interacting factors at the environmental, institutional, household and individual levels. I have focused on the gender dimension of these factors, which are based in the social determinants of health and social ecological frameworks.

When asked to rate their health, most participants said their health is good and they feel strong both physically and emotionally. This is a general question that is known to commonly elicit positive responses (Neis *et al.*, 2001, 153). Later in the interviews, women described ways their lives and health have been affected by the downturn in the fisheries and by policies and practices that compromise the health of fish stocks. Women described feeling increasing pressures from loss of control over when they go fishing, intensity in their work during the fishing season, and costs associated with being in the fishery. These increasing pressures have implications for both women's and men's health and safety at work.

Fisheries restructuring policies and stock shortages are threatening people's incomes in the small boat inshore fishery and seem to be putting pressure on fish

harvesters to take more risks in their work. In the absence of safety training, some women have felt the need to take on more responsibilities for safety aboard the boat – further increasing both the pressures on them and their workload which is already very heavy.

Violence is also a factor affecting women fish harvester's health – both in their physical work environment and as a result of emotional stigmas that affect women's reputation and possible future aspirations at work. Most participants also said they have experienced injuries and illnesses in their work. Although most of their injuries do not seem to be of a serious nature, cumulatively they are having a wearing effect on some women. Arthritis, asthma, kidney infections and urinary tract infections are most prominent among these women. The stress from uncertainty in the fishery is causing anxiety, acid reflux problems, and depression.

Most participants are seeing doctors only when they absolutely have to. Many are avoiding taking medications and do not see their doctors for regular check ups. One reason this may be happening is because they have no coverage for prescriptions or health services not covered by the provincial medicare plan (MCP). They also have no pension plan, and this is a problem for women fish harvesters who are unable to save for retirement.

The next chapter explores issues related to women's informal and formal learning and the implications for their health in the fishery. Some of the ways women's lives are affected by recent professionalization initiatives and the restructuring of post-secondary training institutions are also considered.

CHAPTER 5:
TRAINING, PROFESSIONALIZATION, AND THE
FISHERY OF THE FUTURE

5.1 Introduction

Learning, through formal training and informally on-the-job, is an important determinant of health. People's health improves with formal advances in education but on-the-job learning can also affect health by building confidence and competence and by improving safety at work and security in employment and incomes. When opportunities for learning are compromised, so are people's health and well-being. In this chapter, I focus on gender and class as they affect women's formal and informal learning as fish harvesters.

This chapter provides an exploration of women fish harvesters' informal and formal learning experiences, their links with fisheries professionalization measures, and concludes with a discussion of the implications for women's future as fish harvesters. I begin by discussing women fish harvesters' learning on-the-job aboard fishing boats, the types of skills they are learning, and gaps in their knowledge. Central to this analysis is a discussion of the gender dynamic associated with the ways skills are shared informally in the workplace. I then discuss issues related to women fish harvesters' formal training and explore some reasons for their lack of participation.

The next section explores learning in relation to professionalization and certification, important aspects of the restructured fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador

that are being administered by the Professional Fish Harvester's Certification Board.¹ I discuss the role of this new management structure, the effects of criteria for certification, professionalization, and licensing, and some of their possible effects on women's participation in fish harvesting. I also explore the training aspect of fisheries professionalization and some of the structural issues affecting training for fish harvesters – women and men, and the implications of these for women's future employment and learning in the fishery.

I conclude with a discussion about what women have to say about the future fishery and their role in it. Drawing on data from the PFHCB, I provide an age analysis of the fish harvester workforce in the province and discuss some patterns associated with age, certification levels, and NAFO zone for both women and men fish harvesters.

5.2 Women's Informal Learning at Work

One of the most difficult aspects of working in the small boat inshore fishery involves learning to respond appropriately to the constantly changing conditions on the water and making the right decisions about when to come in. Most of the women interviewed go out on the water every day unless the weather is so bad that neither they nor their husbands can go fishing. Quite often fish harvesters are on the water when the weather turns bad. All these women depend on and trust their husbands' judgement about

¹See Appendix C for an overview of the PFHCB guidelines related to skill requirements for Apprentice, Level I and Level II fish harvesters.

the weather. Some of them leave the decision about what to do solely up to them but a majority of women insist on having a voice in the decision. Over time, many of these women have begun taking a more active role in deciding what to do in bad weather.

While being on the water in an open boat is always stressful to some degree, women have adopted a number of strategies to help them cope with the weather. First, they have learned to use dependable information about the weather by listening to the forecast, keeping an eye out for changes in weather patterns, ensuring that all safety precautions are addressed aboard the boat, and by gaining enough confidence in their knowledge of fishing to really know when it is important to go ashore. Knowing how to dress warmly is also important. One woman told me that the battery-operated wool socks that she bought a couple of years ago have helped her cope with the cold weather.

Another theme common in women's narratives about dealing with bad weather is to pray while on the water. While most women pray that they will make it home safely, the woman in the following excerpt who has been fishing for twenty years, says she no longer prays out of fear. Over time, the ocean has become a place where she feels closer to God and, for her, prayer is interconnected with location, good fishing practices and experience.

FH: I really pray a lot out there but not because I fear the water. We're pretty competent on the water. We won't overload the boat but then sometimes things can unknowingly go wrong. When the wind is blowing it don't take very much.

I: Why do you pray on the water?

FH: When I started fishing I had a fear in me at the time. I feels close to God

when I'm out there. I don't pray for my safety. I pray for other things like for people I know who are sick. My head is clear and you got a lot of time to think when you're on the water ... It's a peaceful place. Yesterday was windy but I didn't feel in danger. When you're on land it seems a lot worse on the water. When I started fishing I was able to see this but I used to give my husband a hard time for going out there (02-03-05s).

Being competent aboard the fishing boat gives her a sense of peace even though she knows that sometimes, "things can unknowingly go wrong." The difference is that fear is no longer such a factor in her daily experience at work. Her experience being on the water has affected her in such a way that the technical skills she has learned have melded with her need to keep herself safe. She is at peace and her strengths dictate her experience.

Beneath the practical knowledge, prayer and other things, lie women's attitudes towards nature and more specifically, the fish stocks. Their narratives indicate that they are consciously conservative in their fishing habits, they describe themselves as less aggressive with the fish stocks, and less willing than their husbands to take unnecessary risks on the water. Based on these values, they negotiate their safety and are quite content to err on the side of caution in both sustaining the fish stocks and keeping themselves safe on the water in rough weather.

Deciding what to do in bad weather is probably the biggest point of negotiation between these women and their husbands. This involves decisions about whether or not they should go out, and when they are out and the wind comes up, deciding when to come ashore. While these women trust their husbands' skills on the water and feel safe most of

the time, they are aware of the men's tendency to want to stay on the water for as long as possible, and to points that are beyond the comfort level of many of the women interviewed.

While these women learn to cope with rougher weather as they spend more time on the water, they appear to be more likely than their husbands to initiate the decision to come ashore. They keep a look out for changing weather and insist that they come ashore. When asked, "How do you feel about working as a fish harvester?" one core harvester said, "I like it on the water as long as it's not too rough. When we go out for crab, we're out fourteen miles in a twenty foot, open boat. I usually watch out for when the sea is high and I want to come in. [My husband] disagrees but usually he gives in" (02-04). Another woman, who has also been fishing for a long time, reflected on her feelings of being scared when she first went on the water. Her experience of fishing has taught her when she should leave and come in, and when it is safe to stay out:

I: When you're on the water and the wind comes up, who makes the decision to come in?

FH: Well, I could make the decision. Sometimes I'll say, like, "The weather is getting bad. We're going to go ashore now." My husband, I guess, he's pretty good at those things. He's a pretty good judge of the weather and things like that. If I find that the weather is not good; now for lobster fishing I don't mind so much, and I pretty well know what is what by now. When I started fishing at first, I was scared of a lot of things unnecessarily, in a way. I wanted to come ashore some days, but really ... then there was other days when it probably was good for us to come ashore too, but I was kind of scared, probably at first.

But I pretty well know what is what now. And when the weather is bad, sometimes my husband is hauling the gear and he's not probably watching what is going on, and you're hauling your trawls, and if it's blowing hard the hooks are

passing you and it's really dangerous, and then I'll say, "You know, that's enough now, we'll go ashore," You hate to do it because probably you only had an hour or two out there, not long enough to haul your gear but you've got to come ashore because the weather drives you ashore (02-03-05).

She says that her husband is a "pretty good judge of the weather" but sometimes "he's probably not watching." She does not depend on him to make the decision. She has enough confidence in her ability to know when it is no longer safe to be out there.

Another woman who fishes away from home six days a week, described the interaction between herself and her husband and ways they have learned to cope with sudden bad weather and decrease the risks they take on the water.

When we leave to come back in, it's a nice run in a 21 foot boat and you're trying to get home sometimes, so you push it windwise. I remember one incident when we left to come in on a Saturday with the lobsters in the boat that we had to bring into the wharf. As we went around the point it was really, really bad. To be honest with you, I cried. I said to my husband, "We'll go back - you got to turn around and go back because I can't take this." It was really rough. So we turned around and spent the whole weekend at the cabin but we had the phone so we could phone and let them know that it was too bad and we were going to stay. Then again, it was better to be safe. It's a long distance out - about 18-20 miles. It takes about 45 minutes with the two motors going. That's steady go. That's one of the downfalls about being in the fishery. Honest to God, I cried more times fishing from the weather. Sometimes I wonder why I'm at it and then you forget it and times go on. You have your good days and you forget about what happens until something comes off again.

So now the things that have happened to us, we avoid it. The weather forecast is something that we always pay attention to. We don't push it no more: you don't push that extra. And we say, "No, whatever is there will be there tomorrow." Too many things have happened to us and there's been a lot of close calls, and for what? To get that lobster? No, we don't work like that no more. We just turn around and go on back. That's one good thing about it (01-01-04).

5.2.1 Women Describe Their Skills in the Fishery

Women's level of comfort on the water is related to their skill levels and general knowledge about the work and the environment in which they work. I asked the women to describe the kinds of skills they need in order to do their work; to tell me if they were learning those skills; and, whether there were any gaps in their learning. Women's first inclination was to say that there were no "skills" needed to do their work on the water. One woman said, "You have to watch what you're doing all the time, but other than that there's no skill needed, I don't think" (01-05-08). Some responded to the question by talking about some of the more technical aspects of the work they have learned, mostly from their husbands. They talked about skills related to using a knife, dressing the fish, and cutting bait as well as adhering to conservation measures.

Using a knife, measuring lobster and crab. It's on the job training and you learn as you go. Like my husband showed me how to dress the fish and you got to be very careful because where they got this grading system in now, if you cut the fish the wrong way, you get a lower grade and you get a lower price. You got to measure the crab and lobster and if it's too small you throw it back (01-02-11).

One woman described the basic skills needed in her work while fishing lobster but then went on to say that her most important job on the water was to be constantly vigilant in ensuring their safety. For her, the job of fishing came second to safety. Other women talked about a wider range of skills including operating the boat. In the following excerpt, a woman who has only been fishing for four years describes the skills that she has learned since she started fishing with her husband. These skills include knowing how to make

traps and navigating. She is enthusiastic about learning, has a husband who is willing to teach her, and intends to move up to level I as soon as possible.

I: What kind of skills do you need to do your job?

FH: Oh my dear – everything. You got to know how to haul up a net, make a trap, mend a net, how to bait gear, how to get gear up, to navigate.

I: Do you consider yourself to be skilled person?

FH: Well, I'm not a professional but I learn and it's easy for me to catch on to things. I have no trouble learning stuff. I'm sure I can catch on and do it. My husband is teaching me (02-07-06).

With the exception of working on the motor, the apprentice above lists many of the same skills as the following woman, who is a core fish harvester with eighteen years of experience. There is very little segregation in the work when she is fishing with her husband.

Well I mean I does whatever needs to be done. I hauls nets, anchors and lines. I can mend all the gear and handle the lobsters, shack trawls, sew in the nets. I can do all that. I can navigate, work the motor, and fix the motor (02-011-04).

For women who live in communities where there are no wharves, each day they have to push the boat off the beach and, when done fishing, drive the boat up on the beach. Most of the time the husband does this, but one woman described how her husband is teaching her to do this job. He teaches her, but she has to learn to not be intimidated by the motor. She eventually realizes, "it's very simple."

The only thing I can't do is get the boat off the beach, which I don't care. See the tricky part about getting on the beach is you got to haul up your motor and the motor is not that light. He even showed me how to do it

and I didn't realize where to put the pressure so she locks too. But I'm thinking just because the motor is big, "I can't do that." It's very simple. When you're there you just got to rise her up on the handle and she locks and that's it. Oh yes, he teaches me all the time (02-08-08).

In order to capture the full range of women's skills related to their fishing work, I asked women in the study to explain the work they do keeping records at home for the fishing enterprise. One woman describes how she manages the finances of the fishing enterprise. She organizes the receipts, pays the bills, keeps track of income and expenses, and makes sure that the paymaster is keeping proper records for EI purposes.

I keep all the receipts and I organize it in binders. I know every cent that I makes and I know what I got to pay out. I know all that. I deal with that. I'm the one that pays his bills. I'm the one who goes to get paid. Now there's not too many women who goes to get paid from the paymaster. We go once a week. I does that. He do not go in. I go in there to see how they're – you know how you got to have so much to get your stamps, right? I does all that. She tells me all that. I'm the one got to – if it got anything to do with fishing, if it's paperwork, I does it. He don't touch nothing (02-08-08).

5.2.2 Skill Gaps

In her Norwegian research, Eva Munk-Madsen explains how crew members in small-scale fisheries are responsible for and dependent on one another. There are usually only a small number of workers fishing together on one boat and this means that they all need to have a wide range of skills: "The smaller the crew, the lower the level of specialization – workers must have comprehensive knowledge and be able to do a variety of tasks" (1999, 10). A recent report done by DFO – Coast Guard on search and rescue

incidents with vessels under 65 feet highlighted that fishing boats less than 25 feet have shown an increasing number of incidents on the water between 1993 and 1999. Most of the incidents were the result of mechanical disablement, highlighting the importance of good mechanical skills among fish harvesters. The <25 foot class of vessels also shows the highest number of fatalities among the three classes of vessels reviewed in the report (2000, 8). This is an indication of the unforgiving environment and the importance of quick responses when something goes wrong aboard these small boats.

Some women fish harvesters who were interviewed reported no problems with learning a wide range of skills from their husbands and co-workers. The woman in the following excerpt describes a cooperative learning environment where she felt completely comfortable learning from her husband and other male crew members.

I was just starting to get into the fishery with lobsters but he didn't say I had to do this or that. There was no pressure on me because I'm a woman to do this or that. They'd show me and I used to say, "Now you show me what I got to do and tell me if I'm doing it right" for whatever was involved. They had patience. Sometimes they'd say, "It's Ok, you sit there I'll do that ...". I'll say, "No no, I'll help because we'll get it done faster" because it's a long day and the quicker you get your work done for the next day, then we can sit back and relax and have a cup of coffee and talk about what happened that day and listen to the news (01-01-04).

Eleven women interviewed in this study work in situations where they are frequently the only other crew member aboard the boat and therefore work alone with their husbands most of the time they are on the water. Their husbands are the skippers and operate the engine and navigate the boat. In describing their skills, I noticed that some women did not mention needing navigational and engine maintenance skills in their

work even though they worked alone with their husbands. This led me to ask them if they would be able to bring the boat ashore safely or do basic repair on the engine should anything ever happen to their husband on the water.

I found that not all women are learning all the technical skills that they need to in order to work safely and confidently on the water. Eight of the sixteen women interviewed said they would not be able to navigate the boat ashore and would not be able to do basic engine maintenance such as changing the spark plugs. I also found that many of the women interviewed are not content with just their husbands having navigational and mechanical skills, precisely because, at times, there are just the two of them on the water. In those situations, it is very important that both the woman and her husband have similar abilities. Given that the husbands are, in some cases at least, reluctant to teach the women some skills, many women have had to strategize ways to improve their skills. Some attempt to convince their husbands to teach them the skills. However, some women worked aboard the boat for years before their husbands began teaching them navigational and mechanical skills. Women are often learning slowly and under dangerous conditions.

The following excerpt draws on the experience of one woman who had to convince her husband to teach her how to do the work aboard the boat. She has been fishing with him for six years and recently he has begun teaching her how to use the motor and navigate the boat. She is slowly learning these skills and sometimes she is called upon to navigate the boat ashore even though she admits that, "the radar is like a foreign object."

FH: At first I had a lot to learn and my husband thought I naturally knew exactly as much as he did from the start. But we got that ironed out, and now it's really good.

I: So he was willing to take the time to teach you?

FH: That was the biggest problem. He thought I knew it already, but I didn't. Where did he think I learned it? "Everyone knows that!" – I heard that quite a few times. The first couple of years it was a bit tough learning a few things. I mean I didn't even know how to steer a boat, which is natural. That was a bit hard. But it's all ironed out pretty well now.

I: So you had to convince him to teach you?

FH: That's true, exactly. That's what he had to learn to do. I guess being at it so many years before I started, it all came natural to him. He lived and breathed it, but I could hardly stand up straight aboard the boat first when I started fishing. ... I'd like to know more about the actual operating of the boat than I do. Navigating, I'd like to know more about that. Like to me the radar aboard the boat is like a foreign object. I've asked [my husband] a few times about it but I really don't understand how that works. The VHF, yes, or the GPS I can handle, but the radar is something foreign. Like sometimes if my husband or son are busy and I got to steer the boat down, and I don't mind if it's a clear day, but when it's foggy the radar to me is something foreign. So I wouldn't mind at all having some training in that area – the navigational part of it (01-05-09).

One woman who has been fishing for six years says that [her husband] has the responsibility to teach her what she needs to know to ensure her safety aboard the boat. His motivation behind teaching her navigation skills this past few years is not to increase her competence as a fish harvester, but rather, "just for safety sake, in case something do happen."

I: Do you have navigation skills?

FH: Yes.

I: Do you have a GPS onboard?

FH: No, we just use a compass.

I: Are you comfortable with that?

FH: Oh yes. [My husband] is teaching me how to read that too. I don't know if I'll ever catch on to it but he's teaching me.

I: There are times when you have foggy weather and you lose visibility when you're coming back in?

FH: Oh yes, and a compass is good to know.

I: Do you feel confident that you're going to learn those skills from [your husband]?

FH: Oh yes. He's teaching me how to use the outboard motor in case something happens he says. I've been learning it over this past couple of years. Not out lobster fishing – we do it on days we're going and coming usually, so that I can get used to handling the motor, just for safety sake he says, in case something do happen. And for when he's hauling traps – at least I'll be able to start the motor and put her in reverse and into neutral, you know. So yeah, he's teaching me and it is a good idea. I'd like to know more. ... I like it. I like being out and learning things that I never knew before, to be honest with you (02-010-02, 07).

Other women talked about not getting the kind of co-operation they need from their husbands so that they can learn to be competent in all aspects of fishing work. Men sometimes put restrictions on women's work activities in the name of protection. One woman says that her husband restricts her from using the hauler (a hydraulic device for hauling nets and pots) because he fears she might get her hands caught. According to her, he has no problem with her being there, (possibly because she helps increase the household income), but he is not going to take the time to teach her the skills to be a competent fish harvester. She is fortunate in that she has co-workers who are willing to teach her at least some of what she needs to know. This woman is required, on occasion, to operate the

boat without adequate knowledge and navigation skills.

I: Do you operate the hauler?

FH: They don't let me at it very much. He'll haul the trap up – he's frightened I'm going to get my hands caught, but he won't give me a chance to use it. He's the kind of a man that wants you in the fishery but don't want the woman to be doing the work.

I: If anything ever happened, do you think you would be able to bring the boat ashore?

FH: No, because he won't teach me how to handle the motor. Like these are things I've been after him to teach me. I should know it – I really should. I've been out there for almost ten years. I don't know if I could get in between the traps anyway, but if you knew a little bit about it to be able to do something.

I: Would you say this is something that you'd like to see changed about your work on the water?

FH: Yes, is to be taught how to do that.

I: With regard to the other skills that you use to do your fishing work, do you feel you've been able to learn those?

FH: Yes, from watching the men work. They don't mind at all. They're the ones more willing to show me things. That's how I learn the stuff, with them. They show me how to clean the lump and they'll help me drive the boat back in. They're the ones who showed me things – I got to say (02-05-02).

The woman in the following excerpt talks about operating the boat as part of normal work routine. However, like some other women, she seems to be doing this work without adequate navigational skills:

Yes, I've steered in from there. Now they have to tell me where to go or God knows where we'd end up to. They say, "Now just keep heading her straight. See that piece of land up there – keep heading towards that." But don't tell me to go north or south because I don't have any sense of direction. But I can usually get her in (01-02-06).

This section has explored some of the issues raised by women concerning their learning on-the-job as fish harvesters. Next I will review women's education levels from school and in post-secondary institutions and then move on to explore some of their thoughts on formal learning in the fishery.

5.3 Women's Formal Education and Training

The level of education the women reached while in high school varied. Three women had grade eight or less, five women had grade nine, one had grade ten, five had grade eleven and one had grade twelve. One woman did not say the grade she reached but she did not complete high-school. Three said they quit due to lack of interest in school (due to pressing family responsibilities), another woman said she could not afford to stay in school, and four others quit because they got pregnant. Since high school, however, some of these women have raised their education levels through upgrading. Currently two women have grade eight, four have grade nine, three have grade eleven and five have grade twelve.

Seven out of the sixteen women went on to do skills training programs after high school. Areas of study were mainly in traditional female occupational areas such as secretarial and data entry, seamstress, home care, interior decorating and baking. The maximum duration of these training programs was nine months. Three women had done a second training program that ranged from two weeks to two years in duration. Areas of study included secretarial, home support and health care. Probably because they are not

aware of the processes involved in assessing prior training for land-based credits (and some of their training obviously relates to managing and operating a fishing enterprise), none of the women interviewed have attempted to gain educational credits under the fish harvester's professionalization guidelines.

5.3.1 Accessing Formal Training in the Fishery

One of the benefits of taking fisheries training is to augment one's on-the-job learning. Many industries feel that it is beneficial for members of their work force to go back into the classroom to learn new skills and polish old ones. From the previous section on women's informal learning, we saw that some women fish harvesters have gaps in their learning on-the-job. Taking formal training is one obvious solution that could address these gaps in women's learning.

When asked to describe any fisheries training they had taken, five women said they had taken some training in the past. Three of these women began fishing prior to the downturn and did their training in the 1970s and 1980s. They were trained in First Aid, bookkeeping and income tax regulations for fishing enterprises, radio communication, and navigation. All five women said the training was offered free in their home communities or in a nearby community. They also said they liked the training and learned a lot from it. Another woman participated in the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board's initiative for prior learning assessment and, as a result, was able to advance to level II. Ten women said they had done no training, mainly because there was "no training

offered.”

I asked the women if they would tell me what types of fisheries training they felt would be beneficial for them to take in the near future. Four women said they did not want to do any fisheries training at all. Two of these women were level II – one a core harvester and both felt they did not need any further training. Two others said they had no interest in doing fisheries training: “I really don't want to go to level II. I have no interest. I'm hoping I'm not going to be at this forever. I don't want to go any further” (01-02-13).

Twelve women said they would like to do some fisheries training if they had the opportunity. Four are apprentices, seven are level II and one is a core fish harvester. Nine women said they would like to learn more formal aspects of safety training such as rescuing a person who has fallen overboard. Five said they would like to learn navigation skills; three said bookkeeping, one said emergency response, and another, engine repair. Three women said they would take fisheries training in anything they could get. When I asked them if they were likely to do training in the future, three felt strongly that they would not be doing any training and thirteen said they would possibly take some training. Eleven said it would have to be offered in a nearby community and they would need a funding source to pay for the training.

The issue of safety training was identified as especially important to women fish harvesters. Its importance is stressed here by a woman who is a core harvester. She says that even knowing how to use a compass should be considered a safety issue.

You can never have too much training in regard to safety. We've been caught in a few jams and I know what it's all about and it's not nice. ... Like I've seen times when – one time I had to jump out of our boat and get into another boat and bring them down into shore. Years ago we used to use those lead jiggers and the guy got one of them caught into his hand. I had to drive the boat back home. Another time we were lobster fishing and it was pretty rough and where we had our traps it was pretty rocky. Then the motor gave out and we couldn't get it to go. What were we supposed to do? We didn't have an anchor aboard and it was going up on the rocks. We shot off a dozen flares and by the time a dory got to us we were about ready to jump ship. So ever since then we've always carried an anchor and a rope because you don't know when you might need it. You could be carrying it around for years and never need it but just the time do you haven't got it there you're going to need it – if not for you well probably for another fisherman.

It's the same with using a compass. You got to know how to use it. You got to know how to get back home or whatever. I mean the way it is with my husband, he [has a medical condition] and if anything happens to him then I got to bring him home (02-011-03).

Another woman thought that safety basically came down to being careful on the water and the usefulness of safety training for fish harvesters is, in her view, limited. She thought training could only help them learn what to do if something happened on the boat:

See, with safety, the only thing you got to be is careful. I'll tell you one thing – if you falls in the water you're not worried about safety because you get out or you're gone. It's nothing they can train you unless you keep your head above the water – that's the only thing the ring is good for but if you're in there any length of time in the weather that we goes out in, you're gone. So all you got to be is careful (02-08-07).

This woman provides an interesting analysis of safety training that places the context – the environment in which they fish – first and foremost as *the* determinant of safety. Given that they are fishing in rough weather in open boats, their main strategy for dealing with those conditions is to be careful.

5.3.2 Barriers to Training for Women

If most women want and need fisheries training, then why are they not getting it? One explanation identified in previous research relates to the macho culture of the fishing industry with its fatalistic ideas, independence, high risk-taking, and low levels of education that promote a resistance among fish harvesters to taking formal training (Stella, 1996, 189). Indeed, the women in this study are being integrated into the male culture of the fishery and, as such, this may be influencing their choices and actions with regard to training. Their lack of initiative related to their training needs could be partly explained by their own risk-taking and adoption of at least some aspects of the male cultural values of the industry.

However, other factors such as the way the male culture of the industry often works to restrict women's learning and work on-the-job and in the industry as well as the bureaucratic and highly individualized approach to fisheries training in the province, may hold greater sway over women's training decisions. Women recognize that definitions of 'safety' and 'risk' are too narrow and restrictive for the reality of their lives and as the woman in the above quote explains, these narrow definitions are embedded in fisheries training, even when it is available.

The woman in the following excerpt says that no one is paying attention to women's training needs in the fishery because they assume women have no such needs. Like other women, she recognizes that she has not been able to learn the skills she needs on the boat from her husband. She said, "I think [representatives from fisheries training

institutions] look at women in the fishery – well, we're not really looked at. Okay, you know, she's out there on the water; she's doing her work but there's no real concern for women. They assume we're getting those skills" (02-02-05). Assuming that women are learning from their husbands the way, in the past, a son would learn from his father, may be a mistake. Women also said that fisheries training is not offered, "not like one time." Under the current framework for delivery of fisheries training in Newfoundland and Labrador, one could argue that there is not much priority given to the training needs of *women or men* in the small boat inshore fishery.

As discussed in Chapter Three, women have been encouraged to take a low profile in the fishing industry and as a result they are less likely to pursue training on their own. There is also the perception that women are temporary workers – even when some of them have been fishing for almost ten years, there is still a perception that they do not really belong and are not really serious about the work. The barriers to women's training are related to how they are positioned and in turn, position themselves, in the fishery – as being less important and therefore, needing less. These limitations affect women's ideas and desires about what they are capable of doing in the fishery. If women are viewed as marginal, they will certainly not be encouraged or supported to organize expensive and time-consuming training. Their marginal status dictates the investment that will be made in women by others, and eventually, by themselves. As the woman in the following excerpt explains, at this point in time, women will do only what they need to do in order to secure their income.

It has something to do with how we see ourselves. If we're content to go out there as we are, it don't mean a lot to women to be level II because there's not a lot of us (at least on this coast). If most of us are content to be at a level that just allows us to fish and most women are content with that. ... While women are content with being at level I, you're never going to see the issue dealt with because it's never going to be brought to light unless it's brought to light by women. Men are quite content to have women as apprentices or level I's. There's not a lot of women out there looking to buy a license to become a core fish harvester.

So ... unless we make it an issue, that's the only way it's going to become an issue. On the other hand, say you were level II and a license became available for you to buy, you would have to have the funds to buy it. But that would give the communities and the family more power if the woman went out and bought a license of her own. Then you got a couple of licenses that you can work with and that would help that family and that community.

The worst of it is that I can't see women ... I can't see that ever becoming an issue because I'm sure if I asked that question most women would say, "That's fine. I got apprentice or level I so I can fish and that's all that matters." So they can fish and provide a living and help with the income. That gets them in and they're fine with that. You might have one or two women out there who might be satisfied with going and buying a license but what a lot of them are not realizing either is the future. If your partner died, if you're not level II, you can't get that enterprise. I don't think a lot of women even realize this. They're so caught up with working day to day and making an income and providing a living for their family, they're not even thinking about that. They see their role in that as temporary or limited in some way. I would say most women are saying when I finish this or whenever I can get out of this - and I'm sure every woman you ask, if they could find another job, would they leave the fishery? Of course they would. If you could come up with something that could provide them with a good living for them and their families, you wouldn't see many of them staying in the fishery. They'd be gone out of the fishery. You wouldn't see many women in the fishery.

[With more cuts coming in the cod quotas], you're going to see more women in there. I don't know if you're ever going to see women to be motivated. It's like with anything - it's got to happen first. If you see something happen to one husband and that woman can't get that

enterprise, that enterprise got to go back to the crown after a certain period. She'll own the enterprise as part of the estate but she'll only have a certain time period to take over the enterprise or she can go out and get a level II fish harvester to fish that license and the incomes don't come back to her. But after a certain period of time she's going to be forced to sell that enterprise to a level II fish harvester if she's not a level II fish harvester.' You're going to see all this play out over the next few years because a lot of these women are around fifty years old and they won't be prepared for it (01-04-08, 09).

This woman may be quite correct in thinking that "it has something to do with how we see ourselves." Most women in this study felt distanced from professionalization and were reluctant to call themselves "fish harvesters." One woman who started fishing in 1994, makes a connection between her level of knowledge about fishing and the term she uses to describe herself: "I usually says I'm a fisherperson ... I feel like I'll never learn enough to be a fish harvester" (02-10-11).

Unless women are willing to make themselves visible as a group and demand training, it will never happen. According to this woman, the male dominated institutions will never address it without being pressured into it by women. She argues that there is more to this issue than securing an income. She wants women to think of themselves as fully skilled and autonomous workers in the fishery. She explains the future implications of not reaching level II: if the husband dies, women may lose rights to fishing licenses and their entire income from the fishing enterprise.

Anthropologist Henrietta Moore says that experience acts ontologically for us but it does so through a technique of construction. She proposes a notion of the "lived anatomy" and of "bodily praxis as a mode of knowledge that draws on an understanding

of experience as a form of embodied intersubjectivity" (1994, 3). If experience constructs identities, what does this mean for women fish harvesters who need training but are not pursuing it? Women in fishing families in Newfoundland and Labrador and in other provinces as well have struggled to be taken seriously and have their work recognized. Because their work has been made invisible by institutional policies and practices, they take a back seat because in so many ways that's where they have been forced to sit. They have accommodated fisheries management policies to the extent that they can but many of them are not prepared to invest any further, financially or otherwise, in an inshore fishery that is in jeopardy and causing so much worry and uncertainty. One woman said, "Personally, I don't think the inshore fishery got much of a life left" (02-010). This does not mean these women do not need training, and badly. Indeed they do, but they have no time left in their day, no money in their pockets, and even less inclination to interact with exclusionary, elitist and distant institutions in order to access the training they need.

In short, there are many good and valid reasons why women fish harvesters cannot and do not take training. However, there are also some good reasons why they should (and must) take training. Some of these women are risking their lives and the lives of others by being in a fishing boat without the knowledge and skills to safely navigate the boat ashore, particularly when there are only two people aboard the boat. They are also compromising their ability to hold a fishing license in the future. However, more importantly, by working in the fishery without the necessary knowledge and skills, they are being devalued as women, as workers, and as human beings.

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province. It contains a clear vision of what the fishing workforce should look like and who should benefit from fisheries 'resources.' That vision was reflected in the 1993 Cashin Report, which outlines the attributes of a professional fish harvester in the future fisheries:

Broadly speaking, a professional fisherman is someone who is experienced, highly skilled and well trained in the fishing sector. This individual is a vessel owner/operator or is a steady crew member who fishes for the full season, and depends on fishing for his livelihood and future. The professional fisherman is involved in the management and development of the fishery through fishermen's organizations. He is respected by his peers and the general public as an accredited member of a professional group (Cashin Report, 1993, 68-69).

This is how a professional fishing workforce was envisioned – men who work full-time, are involved in fisheries management and organizations, and respected in their communities as professional workers.

To some degree, the professionalization initiative ignores the market forces and related EI restructuring that are altering the gender makeup of the workforce by drawing women onto boats and insisting that fish harvesters become flexible (part-time) workers. By ignoring this reality, fisheries professionalization initiatives may affect women's health, in part because it keeps women fish harvesters invisible and ignores their needs as women workers. Women's rights and needs are seen through a dominant lens that has historically been based in male experience and supported by federal and provincial institutions.

Analysis of data from the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board's registration system shows that in 2000, there were 14,502 fish harvesters with regular

certification and an additional 1,282 given temporary certification. Of these, 3,116 (20%) were women fish harvesters, and 58% of these women were at the apprentice level. Analysis by sex and NAFO zone of those given regular certification is shown in Table #4 (see Figure #3 on page 225 for a map of NAFO zones around Newfoundland and Labrador). Table #4 shows that 2,815 (19%) of all fish harvesters were women and 11,687 (81%) were men. There were 1,826 women at the apprentice level, comprising 37% of all apprentices and 65% of all women fish harvesters. There were 322 women at level I, making up 31% of all level Is and 11% of all women fish harvesters. There were 667 women at level II, making up 8% of all those at level II and 24% of all women fish harvesters. The large number of women at the apprentice level has implications for any initiatives that the Board may undertake to help fish harvesters advance through to level II, particularly in the area of training.

The greatest number of women apprentices (533) are in NAFO Zone 3Ps, but women make up 40% of apprentices in both 3Ps and 3K and 45% in 3Pn. The greatest number of women at level I and level II are in 3K. The greatest number of women in all three categories are in 3Ps, where they make up 23% of all fish harvesters. It is significant but not surprising that the highest numbers and percentages of women are found in the more rural areas of the province.

Among the men, 3,125 (27% of all men fish harvesters) are apprentices, 722 (6%) are at level I and 7,830 (67%) are at level II. In terms of certification levels, the distribution of men from apprentice through to level II is almost the reverse of the

distribution found among women fish harvesters. Men are concentrated at level II and women are concentrated at the apprentice level. The greatest number of men in all three levels – apprentice, level I and level II are found in Zone 3L. The greatest number of men fish harvesters, overall, are in 3L, the least rural area of the province.

Ten percent of women and 7% of men who were certified as fish harvesters were given temporary certification by the Board in 2000. Table #5 shows the breakdown of this group of fish harvesters by sex and NAFO Zone and shows that 303 were women and 981 men. This group were given temporary status because they did not meet the Board's maintenance of status criteria, but the Board did not want to refuse them outright. Influencing the Board's decision on this matter was a pending court challenge to the Board's right to act in an area that the claimants insist is under federal jurisdiction.

Information concerning why these fish harvesters given temporary certification did not meet the Board's criteria was not available for the men but it was available for the women. One hundred twenty-three women had a combination of fishing and other income but did not meet the 75% requirement for income from fishing during the fishing season; forty-five women had other income but no fishing income, and one hundred thirty-three women had no income at all from any sources. If the pending court challenge is resolved in the Board's favour, fish harvesters in similar situations next year will likely be refused certification and, according to the legislation, will not be allowed to fish.

NAFO Zone	Apprentices*		Level I		Level 2		Total - Regular Certification		Total	
	F (% Female)	M	F (% Female)	M	F (% Female)	M	F (% in Zone)	M	All Fishers	% overall
2H/2J	32 (23%)	105	10 (29%)	25	19 (6.5%)	273	61 (13%)	403	464	3.2
3K	437 (40%)	646	93 (35%)	174	173 (9%)	1834	703 (21%)	2654	3357	23.15
3L	516 (32%)	1089	70 (23%)	237	155 (6%)	2517	741 (16%)	3843	4584	31.61
3Pn	42 (45%)	52	8 (38%)	13	1 (.6%)	154	51 (19%)	219	270	1.8
3Ps	533 (40%)	791	81 (33%)	162	185 (10%)	1686	799 (23%)	2639	3438	23.70
4R	245 (36%)	439	60 (35%)	111	134 (9%)	1366	439 (19%)	1916	2355	16.24
Unspec. NAFO Zone	21	3				10	21	13	34	.20
Total (%)	1826 (65%)	3125(27%)	322 (11%)	722 (6%)	667 (24%)	7830 (67%)	2815	11687	14502	100
% Women	Apprentices: 37%		Level I: 31%		Level 2: 8%		Regular Certification: 19% women			

Table #4: Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board: Regular Certification of Female and Male Fish Harvesters

* Note: includes Apprentice License Holders

Source: Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board

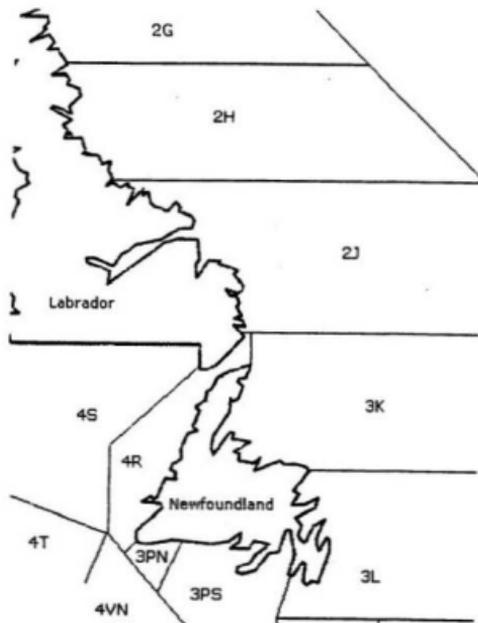


Figure #3: Map of NAFO Zones for Newfoundland and Labrador

The greatest number of men given temporary certification were in NAFO Zone 3L which is close to a number of urban centres, but the greatest number of women given temporary certification were in a more rural area – 3K. Women on the Labrador coast in zones 2H/2J seem to be most affected by this decision to give temporary certification. Twenty-eight women in those two zones were given temporary certification and there were only 61 women with regular certification fishing there. By contrast, 38 men in 2H/2J were given temporary certification but there are 403 men there with regular certification. Even though these women are not the ‘moonlighters’ that advocates of professionalization claim they want to keep out (such as retired school teachers), it does seem that the maintenance of status criteria may affect them disproportionately if the criteria are based on income alone.

NAFO Zone	Temporary Certification in 2000		Total
	Females (% of fish harvesters in the Zone)	Males	
2H/2J	28 (42%)	38	66
3K	80 (30%)	186	266
3L	67 (19%)	285	352
3Pn	5 (13%)	32	37
3Ps	58 (24%)	181	239
4R	63 (19%)	259	322
Total	301 (24%)	981	1282

Table # 5: Fish Harvesters Given Temporary Certification - 2000

Source: Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board

The impact of professionalization on women requires further exploration, monitoring and analysis. The professionalization criteria are constructed on a male model

that requires full-time commitment to the fishery during the fishing season where 75% of a fish harvester's income during that time has to come from fishing. The maintenance of status criteria used to determine fish harvester's dependency on the fishery already appear to be having an adverse impact on some women.

When asked about the fairness of these criteria, a representative of the Professional Fish Harvester's Board commented that "no one depending on the fishery for their livelihood would lose their certification, male or female." In 2000, women were 24% of those given temporary certification. Next year there will not be a 'temporary certification' category and women in similar situations will, in all likelihood, lose their certification altogether. If this happens, the responsibility will be on women, as individuals, to appeal the decision of the Board – to engage in a process that is foreign to them, in an industry that has historically marginalized their work and worth. If this is what they are forced to do then I am certain that only a small number of women will proceed with appeals. However, I would also suggest that a larger number may unnecessarily and unfairly fall through the cracks. With almost 40% of apprentice fish harvesters being women, the more important challenge could be ensuring that women get the training opportunities and support they need, and ensuring they are treated as serious and committed professional fish harvesters. The first step may be to acknowledge women as a major part of the fisheries workforce and revise maintenance of status criteria so they reflect women's workforce patterns more realistically and fairly.

One aspect of women's workforce patterns is that they often work part-time - for both voluntary and involuntary reasons. Many of the women in this study are not engaged with the professionalization process and do not see themselves as "fish harvesters." This is one effect of the male construction of the professional fish harvester label. Women's conception of themselves as 'helper' has no direct link with professionalization categories - women at level II called themselves 'helpers' almost as readily as those at the apprentice level. Professionalization assumes a particular path in people's learning - through both formal and informal learning one progresses from apprentice to level II with the aim to buy a license and thereby secure one's place in the fishery. According to professionalization criteria, fish harvesters must work full-time at fishing during the season (PFHCB, May - 2000).³ There is no longer any category for part-time fish harvesters and there is no category for 'helper.'

The lack of a part-time category may become problematic for some women in this study. One woman who has been fishing for six years with her husband and is at the apprentice level, described herself as a part-time fishery worker.

I enjoy cod fishing but I'll probably only go three days a week. I don't go everyday - like I don't go in 20 and 25 mile per hour winds like my husband. He can cope with the weather and I'm terrified. I usually goes on good days and half good days I'll call it ... I know some women who goes with their husbands every day. Well I'm a helper and if I work my way up, I'm still only into it as a part-time fisher and as a helper. I'm not into it to be a skipper. I feel that ... like any help that my husband needs, if

³The criteria state that 75% of a fish harvester's income must come from fishing during the fishing season.

I can learn how to do it, well then that's what I'm there for. I've learned a lot (02-010-04).

This woman's understanding of her role needs to be viewed in the context of professionalization criteria. Although she works about fifty hours a week in the fishery, she sees her role as part-time and as a helper. Compared to others around her who work almost twice as many hours a week, she would be considered part-time even though by most workforce standards, she is working full-time hours. She insists that she is a part-time fish harvester when there is no longer a part-time category available. Restructuring and professionalization are intended to do away with the part-time category for fish harvesters. As a 'helper' with six years experience on the water, it is not clear what the implications will be for her if she insists on a part-time role in the fishery or if she will be permitted to fish as a part-time apprentice, level I or level II fish harvester.

As Armstrong found, women's workforce patterns are not like men's, and increasingly, statistics have shown that women are more likely to be part-time workers. In her research, she found that restructuring made it more difficult for men to take on extra work and more necessary for women to take on multiple part-time jobs. The number of multiple job holders decreased in male-dominated areas and increased in the female-dominated service sector work (Armstrong, 1995, 369). Given the nature of employment in rural Newfoundland communities, full-time year-round work is very difficult to obtain. It is likely, in the current environment of high unemployment, that women in rural communities are trying to piece together an income from multiple sources. Susan

Williams found that women in fishing and fish processing tend to work part-time and they do this much more than men (1996, 14). The requirement that fish harvesters work full-time in the industry where 75% of their earnings during the fishing season must come from fishing may be unreasonable for the small boat sector, and particularly for women fish harvesters. Women may have commitments to other paid work that they cannot give up totally in order to go fishing. In addition, they require flexibility in order to deal with the household responsibilities that take up a lot of their time. This may require their absence from fishing at times. None of this means that they are not depending on the fishery for their livelihood and their continued health and well being.

5.4.1 Enforcing Professionalization

I wanted to understand how professionalization was going to work, the types of support needed from the provincial and federal governments in order for it to work, who would enforce it, and in particular, the role of the DFO in enforcement. I asked a representative from the Board to explain enforcement and the links between the Board and the DFO. In the following excerpt, he explained how enforcement would proceed and the role of DFO.

Even though it's not in their [DFOs] legislation, it's sort of a general assumption out there that all fish harvesters, in order to be fishing on board any commercial fishing vessel, are required to be registered with the Board. A lot of fisheries officers are actually boarding vessels and asking to see certification cards. Others aren't. I think it sort of depends on the area and the attitudes of the fisheries officers but it's becoming more and more commonplace for DFO to require certification cards especially when

they're issuing species licenses. When fellows come into the local office to get their species licenses renewed they'll be asked whether or not they're certified with the Board and just to confirm their certification level. Also, DFO has it in some of their licensing policy that in order to be a species holder and have a species license transferred to your name you must be a level two professional fish harvester in good standing with the Board. So right now that's probably the biggest connection between professionalization and DFO is that in order to become a license holder you have to be a level two fish harvester, which I guess was the goal of a lot of fishermen in the early stages of professionalization. They wanted to see that people who held licenses were those who were the most deserving. They were those who had punched their time – to be level two you have to have a minimum of at least five years of full-time fishing so that you don't have individuals walking off the street with no real commitment or attachment to the industry getting licenses. So that's probably the biggest connection now between the regulatory agency which is DFO, and us.

This quote suggests that professionalization is weakly enforced and if women or men wanted to ignore the requirement for certification and go ahead and fish as crew members they could do so, in many cases, without fear of penalties or repercussions. However, with 15,753 men and women registered and given certification by the Board on an annual basis, and DFO providing support on the water (albeit minimal), and linking access to licenses with certification levels, it does seem to have become important to most fish harvesters. This buy-in from fish harvesters, more than anything else, could ensure that most fish harvesters on the water are becoming certified and going through the process according to the guidelines laid down by the Board.

5.4.2 Professionalization Training

In this study, women are represented from the full range of certification levels. The majority of women interviewed are at level II, although the majority of women fish harvesters certified by the Board are at the apprentice level. Four women interviewed are at the apprentice level and have been fishing for an average of 3.5 years; one woman at level I has been fishing for ten years; nine women at level II have been fishing for an average of twelve years. One of these women has eight years experience and holds a lobster license. Two other women are core fish harvesters who have spent an average of 16.5 years fishing and hold lobster licenses.

Most women interviewed were not engaged in the professionalization process. Some described professionalization in a way that was disassociated from their actual fishing work. Rather, they see it as something they need to go along with because that is the way, "they're doing it now." This understanding of professionalization may result in women not taking advantage of professionalization to address their skill gaps and benefit them in their work. I asked one woman, "What do you see professionalization training doing for you?" She responded with the following:

It's all based on years of experience and land-based credits. For the fishing part, nothing. It just puts you in a higher bracket in the restructuring of the fishery as they're doing it now. For the fishing part, you're going to be doing as your work, your job, and it does nothing any different. Nothing. You go out and go fishing every day but it's just the same as if you were in kindergarten, grade 1, and grade two. You know more in grade two than you knew in kindergarten because you learned it. Like the skills I get fishing, you might know more about navigation because they introduces you to it but for your work part, it's the same old same old (02-07-07).

The requirement that apprentice and level I fish harvesters obtain one hundred and twenty educational credits presents a major challenge for many fish harvesters and for those involved in professionalization. How are rural fish harvesters able to access such training? Will the training address their skill gaps? How will they afford this training?

Ironically, the main institution involved in fisheries training in Newfoundland and Labrador has not been the community college system – College of the North Atlantic (CONA) – which has fifteen campuses in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Fisheries training has historically been delivered by the Fisheries and Marine Institute (the Marine Institute), located in St. John's, which recently became an arm of Memorial University in the restructuring of the post-secondary education system. Among their many fisheries, marine and oil related programs, the Marine Institute currently operate a Community Based Fisheries Program for fish harvesters. However, unlike many of their other programs, which are subsidized, this one is operated on a full cost recovery basis and is treated as a professional development program similar to those offered at Memorial University to the business community.

The Marine Institute's current calendar shows the cost of training for fish harvesters to be on average \$125.00 per day. This obviously poses major problems for many inshore fish harvesters, especially those who are struggling to make ends meet in small open boats. Class issues inherent in such an approach to training mean that fish harvesters working aboard bigger vessels are more likely to access professionalization training but those on smaller vessels may not. The high cost of training makes it

particularly problematic for women who may be more likely to be working alone with their husbands in small open boats and unable to afford such training.

Since the moratorium, it has been more difficult for fish harvesters to gain funding for training. Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) are not very enthusiastic about funding fisheries training – after all, they have spent the past nine years trying to reduce the size of the workforce and encouraging people to leave the fishing industry altogether.

The role of training in restructuring is of great interest in this study. Why do remedies to economic crises always seem to have a focus on training? What is the purpose of professionalization training for fish harvesters? What types of institutional supports are necessary in order for women fish harvesters to gain the educational credits needed to advance from apprentice to level II? The representative interviewed from the Board described some of the challenges that the Board is attempting to deal with so that more training is available for fish harvesters:

We've done our best to partner with [the Marine Institute] to try to identify where the training needs are, where the areas are that have people interested in training but there is a huge stumbling block now in that obviously we've got hundreds of communities, thousands of miles of coastline and accessibility to training is a huge problem. We recognize that there are plenty of apprentices, level Is and level IIs who would like to be doing navigation courses and safety courses and who really don't have access to them – not only access in terms of geographical access but also access as far as the costs associated with the training and we recognize that as probably one of the biggest problems facing the whole professionalization process.

We're trying to deal with that in a number of ways. HRDC and the Marine Institute are represented on our Board of Directors. There's sort of an ongoing process between our Board and the Marine Institute and other training facilities and HRDC to try to deal with the problem of the high cost of fisheries training. We have the University and other colleges here who have core funding which allows the courses and programs to operate not so much on a cost recovery basis whereas our school of fisheries right now with its community-based programs, which is the only means for getting those fisheries training programs out to the local level, is through the school of fisheries and their community-based training program. They're really operating, from what they tell me, on a cost recovery basis so what it does is it really drives up the cost of the individual courses. Right now, it's a bit staggering to see the cost. For example a two-week course in navigation or a two-week course in net mending, or any of the two-week courses run between \$1,000 and \$1,400 which would basically give you ten credits. Just to give you an idea, the fisheries related courses that are directly related to fishing, for one day in school you get one credit. So a two-week course that's ten days in school gives you ten credits. For an apprentice who's just coming in and needs 120 credits to move from apprentice to level II, if you got to accumulate those credits through individual two-week courses you could be looking at twelve courses at about \$1,000 to \$1,400 each. So I don't know what the cost is at MUN now but I don't think my bachelor degree cost me that much and really, you're only looking at twenty-four weeks in school to get 120 credits. That's a lot of money for a short period in school. So really without HRDC funding to help a lot of these individuals, accessing this training is going to be nearly impossible. And that's just the cost, we haven't even really gotten into the problem of having to leave rural communities to go into a larger center, the costs associated with living and traveling that would go on top of tuition.

In the past HRDC have been sort of spotty with kind of an *ad hoc* system. They don't always have the money and what we've found here is that you'll get individuals early on in the year going to HRDC and possibly being turned down and then later in the year, depending on the way the funding pools go, if there's money sort of left in education and training, someone may get approved. So really it depends on a number of things. It depends on the individual counselor that you meet with and their attitude towards fisheries training. We got a lot of HRDC counselors who rightfully or wrongfully feel that HRDC spent so much money through NCARP and TAGS to try to get individuals out of the fishery that now

they don't really see the benefits of fisheries training even though we've sort of tried to explain to them how important it is to have a trained and skilled labor force.

So we're here trying to promote training because those individuals, in order to secure their place in any kind of a fishery of the future, have to really upgrade themselves. Any young fish harvester who wants to have the future in the fishery really should be looking at getting to level II because if you don't have a species license it's really going to be difficult to make a decent living in the fishery.

I think we recognize the fact that right now the training requirements that are out there and the accessibility of training is probably one of the final hurdles and it's going to be a big hurdle to get over. I think more and more of what you're seeing is for the first two or three years of professionalization a lot of the fish harvesters didn't realize that they required credits to upgrade. They didn't realize what the certification criteria were, what courses were available to them. I think more and more everyday we get more telephone calls with people asking how many credits they need in order to get from one level to the next. And you'll tell them how many credits they need and they'll want to know how they can get them. How many credits for this? How many credits will I get for that? So I think you're seeing more and more interest in education and it's very frustrating for us to get telephone calls from a person who for example lives on the Port aux Port Peninsula who says "I've needed 20 credits to get to level two for the past 18 months. When is the next course going to be offered out here?"

The intent of the Marine Institute's Community Based Fisheries Program was to take training to rural communities where fish harvesters live. However, they will only do this under specific circumstances. According to their application procedures, they require that, "a minimum of 12 applicants be *approved to register* for a specific offering of a specific course (all fees and documentation received) in order to confirm the start of a course. This will be decided on the Friday two weeks prior to the scheduled start date of each course. If the minimum number of applicants have not been approved to register, the

offering will be cancelled and all applicants will be notified" (Fisheries and Marine Institute, 2000). The full responsibility for doing all the recruitment of trainees and funding for training rests with fish harvesters to organize alone in their communities. That is a lot of work and very difficult for women to do on top of their many responsibilities in the home and in paid work. In at least one case, ten fish harvesters signed up and paid for training but the course was cancelled because the Marine Institute's criterion of twelve applicants was not met.

I wanted to know if fish harvesters throughout Newfoundland and Labrador are able to access training through such a program model and, in particular, if women fish harvesters were accessing this training. The Marine Institute provided data for four years on training delivered through their Community Based Fisheries Program. Table #6 indicates that fish harvesters took 787 training seats through the Marine Institute's Fisheries Program from 1996 to 2000 and 51 of these were filled by fish harvesters outside the province. In 2000 there were 6,000 fish harvesters certified as apprentices and level 1s in the province and likely needing some training in order to advance. Yet, only 109 fish harvesters in the province took training. These data show that women fish harvesters have been all but absent from their classrooms: after four years only eleven training seats were taken by women, constituting 1.4% of the training. Most of the training has been done by fish harvesters in Zones 3K and 3L. It is interesting that between 1996 and 2000, almost as much training had been delivered outside the province as had been delivered in four of the most rural NAFO zones combined within the province – 2H/2J, 3Ps, 3Pn, and 4R.

NAFO ZONE	1996-1997		1997-1998		1998-1999		1999-2000		Total
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
2H/2J	0	7	0	1	0	1	0	1	10
3K	1	14	3	71	1	92	0	18	200
3L	0	8	0	50	1	286	4	28	377
3Ps	0	7	0	0	0	8	0	6	21
3Pn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
4R	0	33	0	30	0	13	1	50	127
Out of Province	0	5	0	11	0	24	0	11	51
Total	1	74	3	163	2	424	5	115	787

Table #6: Number of Training Seats by Zone, Sex and Year for the Marine Institute's Community Based Fisheries Program.

Source: Fisheries and Marine Institute.

The Board's ability to insist that fish harvesters upgrade their skills is clearly undermined if fish harvesters cannot access or afford training. Such an approach to training is typical of the bureaucratic approach taken towards professionalization in many occupations. The problem here is compounded because fishing is not like many other occupations. Setting aside professionalization training for a moment, how are the training needs of fish harvesters, which are important for their work and safety aboard fishing vessels, as well as their overall health, being met if fish harvesters cannot access or afford training? Who benefits from such a model for the delivery of training? These questions reflect one of the biggest challenges for the Board at this time, even with regard to the five credits for safety training required at the apprentice level. As the representative from the Board noted, "We have nearly 6,000 apprentices in our system and in order to make it mandatory for them to do safety training, obviously the Board recognizes that you can't

make something mandatory if it's physically impossible for people to attain it.”

Under the Community Outreach Program for Fish Harvesters, not only is it difficult for fish harvesters to get the training they need in order to address their skill gaps, it is also very difficult for them to get the training they need in order to advance in the professionalization process. One cannot help but ask why fisheries training is being promoted in such a manner. In my view, it may be handled in this way because officials in charge of educational institutions such as the Marine Institute are themselves embedded in modernization and professionalization processes that make them unable and unwilling to engage in processes at the community level where fish harvesters actually live and work. They are also participating in the economic push for ‘training’ that is so profitable for their institutions and is such a dominant aspect of restructuring in Canada and other countries.

While many of us are capable of seeking out the training that best meets our needs if we have enough information and support, few of us are tasked with the job of organizing that training and the funding for it – and not just for ourselves but for eleven others. The Marine Institute’s criteria for fisheries training expects exactly this of fish harvesters. Given the work and coordination skill involved in setting up a training program, there is little wonder that inshore fish harvesters and in particular, women, are not seeking training. It is also not surprising that some fish harvesters would be skeptical of professionalization training. One woman interviewed summed up her thoughts on the handling of fisheries training by saying, “They want to get us out of the fishery and that’s it.”

We had pamphlets come from the Marine Institute with a list of courses. It costs more to do those courses than it would do a university degree. You're a fisherperson who makes your living three months of the year and you're expected to do those courses? And in our community, how can we get twelve people together? I don't think there will ever be any training offered that way. I think they want to get us out of the fishery and that's it (02-03-07s).

Another woman interviewed tried to organize training for a group of men fish harvesters in her community. Here's what she had to say about that experience:

There were courses last year that the men wanted and I had to get a certain number of people signed up for this course. We had a few people who weren't interested in doing it. By the time all was said and done the course never happened. So when the men runs into this and the men are recognized as having all this stuff, where are women going to fall to? You're never going to get someone interested in coming in and training those women and the women need to be trained because they are totally different than the men where their injuries are totally different injuries (01-04-10).

The institutional barriers have put fisheries training far out of reach for the small boat inshore fish harvesters in rural communities. This is especially true for women fish harvesters because they often have less priority within households for training and if there are young children present, women often cannot leave their homes for extended periods of time. When I asked one woman if she would be able to go to a major center for training, she said, "that would be a problem with two kids in school and a husband who only cooks moose" (02-05-07).

Other women fish harvesters are learning what they need to know on their own and they no longer look to the post-secondary education system to meet their training needs. One woman who has been fishing for twenty years describes how she has been

teaching herself what she needs to know:

I have a tendency you know, if I don't know something, I'll go and get books on it and eventually I'll catch up on it and then after awhile, you learn enough to get by. Then after awhile, this one and that one were calling me to get help" (02-03-09).

5.4.3 PFHCB Initiatives

The professionalization model may not be an appropriate or adequate way to address the training needs of inshore fish harvesters in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. As the representative from the Professional Fish Harvester's Board has acknowledged, other means will have to be found to ensure they get training. Much of this responsibility will likely fall on the shoulders of the Board, even though they see their role as establishing training levels as it relates to certification and not as designers, deliverers, or outreach agents for training.

In response to the problem of access and cost associated with fisheries training, the Board has persisted in developing a number of strategies to help fish harvesters attain educational credits. The first involves giving credits for 'fishery-related' training done in the past. The second involves two Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition initiatives. The following excerpt outlines the rationale for the Board's informal approach to giving educational credits to fish harvesters for related training done in the past.

As a result of the problems with the Marine Institute's program, we've been extremely flexible with the credits that are required and one of the big things that we've been encouraging individuals to do is to get any kind of past training that they've done and a lot of harvesters didn't realize that

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It is also significant that the type of skills acknowledged as important are often very gender specific and reflect skills typical of male craft workers. This is problematic as well because once again it reflects a particular vision of the fisheries workforce and places value on the work that men do, while excluding the ground work, bookkeeping, and managerial skills that women often bring to fishing enterprises.

In addition to giving credits for past training, the Board has also delivered two Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) outreach initiatives, one in 2000 targeted at level I fish harvesters and another in 2001 targeted at both apprentices and level Is. The aim with PLAR initiatives is to award credit for learning that has taken place in other settings outside educational institutions, such as in the paid workforce and through one's own activities such as reading, observing, and volunteer work. Assessments were done in 2000 and 2001 by an all-male team who received training through the Marine Institute. The following chart summarizes the PLAR assessments done by the Board in 2000 and 2001.

Assessment Area	Assessments in 2000				Assessments in 2001			
	# of Assessments		Assessments Approved n (%)		# of Assessments		Assessments Approved n (%)	
	Female (n=18)	Male (n=123)	Female	Male	Female (n=24)	Male (n=176)	Female	Male
Basic Net Making & Repair	9	52	3(33%)	41(79%)	4	73	2(50%)	53(73%)
Fish Handling & Holding	16	85	15(94%)	82(96%)	17	148	17(100%)	148(100%)
Gillnetting	9	73	8(88%)	72(99%)	13	118	11(85%)	113(96%)
Longline Fishing	9	48	8(88%)	45(94%)	6	92	5(83%)	82(89%)
Small Boat Safety (3 credits)	3	11	3(100%)	9(82%)	12	78	9(75%)	73(94%)
Small Engine Repair & Maintenance	2	48	0(0%)	46(96%)	3	92	2(67%)	88(96%)
Trap Fishing	5	39	3(60%)	37(95%)	3	53	2(67%)	36(68%)
Pot Fishing	16	89	15(94%)	89(100%)	16	133	15(94%)	132(99%)
Hydraulic System Maintenance	0	9	n/a	9(100%)	0	42	n/a	39(93%)
Introduction to Navigation and Safety	0	35	n/a	23(66%)	2	39	2(100%)	24(61%)
Diesel Engine Repair, Maintenance & Lay-up	0	23	n/a	23(100%)	2	65	1(50%)	62(95%)
Total Number of Assessments - n (%)	69 (12% Overall)	512	55 (80%)	476 (93%)	78 (8% Overall)	933	66 (85%)	850 (91%)

Table #7: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Outreach Initiatives by the PFHCB (2000 and 2001 Summaries)

Source: PFHCB

The PLAR assessment areas were the same for 2000 and 2001. They were: trap fishing, gillnetting, longline fishing, pot fishing, diesel engine maintenance and lay-up, hydraulic system maintenance, small engine maintenance and lay-up, basic net making and repair, fish handling and holding, introduction to navigation and safety, and small boat safety. In 2000, 18 women (13%) and 123 men (87%) participated in the PLAR processes which were targeted solely at level I fish harvesters. Women participated in 69 assessments done in 8 skill assessment areas. No women were assessed in hydraulic system maintenance, introduction to navigation and safety, and diesel engine repair and maintenance. Eighty percent of assessments done on women were approved. Three hundred sixty-five credits were given to women – an average of 20 credits per woman. Nine women out of 18 (50%) advanced to level II. One hundred twenty-three men participated in 512 assessments done in all 11 skill assessment areas. Ninety-three percent of assessments done on men were approved. Thirty five hundred credits were given to 123 men - this is an average of 28 credits each. Ninety-one men, (74% of male participants) advanced to Level II.

In 2000, women were assessed on a narrower range of skills compared to assessments done on men. Women were mainly assessed in areas directly associated with catching and handling fish or safety. Their participation in areas requiring mechanical skills such as hydraulic system maintenance, introduction to navigation or diesel engine repair was very low. Only two women were assessed in 'small engine repair and maintenance' but neither passed. In all but one area, a greater percentage of assessments

done on men were approved. The one exception was 'small boat safety.' However, it is also significant that only two thirds of men passed the Introduction to Navigation and Safety. In looking at the location of assessments, there is once again less involvement in the more rural areas of the province: the greatest number of assessments done on both women and men were done in NAFO area 3L.

In 2001, 24 women (12%) and 176 men (88%) participated in the PLAR process. This is a 43% increase in the number of men assessed compared to 2000. The number of women participating increased by 33% but women as a percentage of overall participants decreased from 12% in 2000 to 8% in 2001. Eighty-five percent of assessments done on women were approved. Four hundred fifty credits were given to 24 women – an average of 19 credits each. Fourteen out of 24 women (58%) advanced – eight from level I to level II and six from apprentice to level I. One hundred seventy-six men participated in 933 assessments done in all 11 assessment areas. Ninety one percent of assessments done on men were approved. Men were given 6320 credits – an average of 36 credits each. This figure is almost double the average credits given to women. One hundred twenty-two men, 69% of male participants, advanced – 61 from apprentice to level I and 61 from level I to level II.

In 2001, women's participation again remained limited in terms of the skill areas in which they were assessed. Those who participated were tested in more areas than in 2000, but the number of assessments done on women in mechanical areas and navigation remained extremely low. Once again, a greater percentage of assessments done on men

were approved – 91% as compared to 85% for women and men were given on average 36 credits each compared to women who got only 19 credits each. Of the ten areas in which women and men were assessed, a greater percentage of men were approved in eight of the ten, and in another area, both women and men were given the same approval rate. This indicates possible skill deficiencies but it may also be a gender bias with the all-male group of assessors hired to do the assessments. Once again the approval rate for men in the ‘Intro to Navigation and Safety’ area was low – 61%. The greatest number of assessments done in 2001 for women was in NAFO area 3K and the greatest number done for men was the same as 2000, in NAFO area 3L.

It is important to analyze the skill areas in which fish harvesters were being assessed. The choice of skill areas by officials from the PFHCB and the Marine Institute must be seen, in part, as political and ideological. By choosing these skills for assessment and emphasizing the technical skills involved in fishing, they identified the skills that they considered to be most valuable and recognized in the fishery from the perspective of men in (fairly) influential positions. However, their choice of skills also identifies what is not important – for example, the ground support, enterprise management and record-keeping work that women do for the fishing enterprise. By leaving out these skill areas, they excluded this work from being assessed and women, who do a lot of this work, from receiving credit for it. It is important to note that the Marine Institute offers a ten-day course entitled, “Managing Your Fishing Enterprise” in their 2000-2001 list of available certificate course to be taken under their Community Based Fisheries Program (Fisheries

and Marine Institute, School of Fisheries, 2000). Yet, no one felt it was important enough to be included in the PLAR assessments. This should be seen as another example of how professionalization processes that are built upon male constructs of work and skill and exclude women in their development can result in women's exclusion from the industry.

The low participation rate of women in the PLAR initiatives also indicates that even though they make up 37% of all apprentices and 31% of level Is, they were not a focus of outreach for these initiatives. This lack of participation in the PLAR initiatives and in the Marine Institute's Community Outreach program for fish harvesters may result in a number of future problems if it continues. First, their training needs as fish harvesters are not being addressed and some of them may be working on the water without all the skills needed to do so safely. Their lack of training also means they will not meet the professionalization criteria in order to reach level II and this may have negative repercussions for women as well.

Early in 2002, the Board, in partnership with the Marine Institute and HRDC, began a third initiative – a mandatory safety training program for apprentice fish harvesters. One woman was trained as an instructor with this initiative and a vast majority of those signing up to do the 5-day course are women. The course is being delivered in a large number of rural communities and fish harvesters are required to pay one third of the cost of the training. HRDC and the PFHCB are funding the remaining two thirds of the cost. This may be a model for future training that has the potential to be more inclusive of women and their training needs. One woman in this study who took this safety training

told me, "Things are going to be a lot different this spring when I go back aboard that boat."

Next I turn to some final thoughts from women on their future as fish harvesters and the future of the Newfoundland and Labrador inshore fishery.

5.5 The Fishery of the Future

It is fitting to conclude this exploration of women fish harvester's work, learning and health with their thoughts on their futures in the inshore fishery. Most of the women in this study said they would likely be staying in their jobs in the fishery. Some were very positive and enthusiastic about staying while others were not. Some were concerned about the effects of further quota restrictions. One woman whose sons are fishing with her and her husband, talked about the likely impact of the impending quota cuts in their area on her ability to stay in the fishery:

I might slowly be drove out of it anyway because we got two sons with families now and if we take a major reduction in quota, I can see me probably being the first one to go but if that happens in our enterprise, it will be my choice. I won't be drove out because there's a cut in quota but as a mother. I would rather see my sons and their families provided for than me having that extra income. We can survive on my husbands income (01-04-05).

Most other women work with their husbands in small boats and therefore would not be affected by quota cuts in the same way.

What you'll see then is more women as partners. Our enterprise is a little different. A lot of the women who are out there now, their husbands are in smaller boats so you're going to see more partnerships like ours started in

the beginning. We got a bigger boat and for the most part we can still survive because, if need be, my husband and I can still do the lobster and that's all I'll do and the rest I'll just give it to my sons (01-04-05).

This woman assesses her future work based on the income needs of not only her family, but also her sons' families. Her role as mother in the decision is critical.

As we saw in previous chapters, women who would rather work elsewhere really do not have many options and often have to stay, regardless of where they would rather work. Just as women had little choice about entering the fishery, it seems that some of them also do not have a choice about leaving. One woman who was injured on their boat, said that she expected to be out of the fishery altogether within a few years. This would pose hardship for her family because in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, as elsewhere, it is important for two people to be making an income when raising children.

In order for me and [my husband] to have everything that we got for us and the three kids, I need or I should say I sort of got to stay in the fishery for the time being. It's not a bad life. I don't mind it. It's like the old saying, "you can get hardened into anything" (01-01-07).

The older workers in the study said they will stay to help prepare financially for retirement even though they acknowledge that this is difficult: "I don't think, in a way, that we can put enough away for our retirement, because we don't have a pension plan" (02-03-06). A few women said they would stay until something better comes along on land. In the following excerpt, one woman ponders what, "having a decent job" really means for her at this point in her life:

FH: I have to keep at it until something else comes up that I think I would enjoy. I'm going to have to keep at this.... until – if I could get something decent and I

don't know what decent is right now.

I: What do you think would make you give it up?

FH: I don't know. Lots of times I think if I was working in a nice warm place and you could get up at a decent hour, but then again, 'What is decent?' I don't get it. I mean that's a decent hour to fish. So if a decent hour for my kids to get up and go to school is at 7:00 so that's a decent hour for them to get up. So if I was working, a decent hour would be to get up at 7:00 when the kids get up, not at 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning – definitely not. That's it. Lots of time I think if I had – I wouldn't want an office job I don't think, I'd have to be out in the open where I could work. That's changed about me a lot. Like I don't think I could work at a snack bar – I'd be too closed in. I'd have to have a big space where I could really go.

I like fishing now to the point that I got a child that needs a lot of extra work with his schoolwork so I can give him that time. If I was working 9 to 5 now, that would be a bothersome job for me because by the time I get home in the evening at 5:00, the homework would be so late he would be frustrated and I would be frustrated. ... if I had a 9 to 5 job everything would be rush rush rush (01-02-4,11).

Since she went fishing, her thoughts about the kind of work she would like to do have changed. Having "a big space" where she could "really go" are not exactly common characteristics of work environments where women have traditionally worked. Even with all her reservations about the uncertainty and stress of being part of the fishery, for now, fishing fits her needs as a mother and a worker and she intends to stay.

The vast majority of women do not think that the fishery has a viable future. They attribute much of its demise to fisheries management policies, the state of the fish stocks, and the effects of these changes on their ability to make a decent living at present.

However, they say they will bide their time and retire with their husbands even though they know that, "the inshore fishery is dying" in their area.

It is often acknowledged that government has traditionally favoured the offshore fishery and viewed the inshore fishery as unproductive and inefficient. As Palmer and Sinclair argue (1997, 96), the inshore fishery, based upon household labour in Newfoundland and Labrador, has survived mainly because government has tried to make its disappearance as gradual as possible in order to avoid protest and/or because they have failed to enforce their policies designed to eliminate the inshore fishery. And as the woman above implies, time and the constant pressure on inshore fish harvesters may eventually get them what they want anyway.

Evidence of women fish harvesters' beliefs about the future viability of the fishery show up in their tendencies to encourage their children to work in other sectors of the economy:

In our fishery right now, where's our people going to come from to take over the licenses? It seems to me there isn't a future in the fishery – crab and lobster may always be there but the cod won't be there. The gill nets are destroying the fishery and the draggers are still out there. When we get 65 [years old] we can retire and get a pension ... but I wish we could retire when he turns 60. We got a union and we got no pension and no health plan. I guess you figures out then why no young people are interested. If you sold your license then most of the fisheries are going to be dying out anyway so is the government going to want to buy it? The inshore fishery is dying. In our age group we're going to be the last ones to fish (02-03-06).

When we look at the children of women in this study, we can see the high degree of out-migration of young adults from rural communities. Twenty-four children had left home since 1992, but only seven (29%) remained living in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. Eight of those moving away were women and only two stayed in rural

communities. In terms of employment, three were working in health and service occupations. Two others had college diplomas: one was unemployed and the other was working in a semi-professional job. Two were in university/college and another daughter fished with her husband. Sixteen men left home and only five remained living in rural communities. Four were in university or college, five worked in the fishing industry (4 fishing and 1 processing), five worked in other areas such as apprenticeable trades, and two were unemployed.

When the Professional Fish Harvesters gave me access to parts of their database, I took the opportunity to do an age analysis of the fish harvesters workforce. Table #8 below shows an overview of that analysis and Table #9 provides a detailed analysis by NAFO Zone. These data indicate that the largest number of women and men fish harvesters are between the ages of 35 and 44. When we look at the ages of women fish harvesters, we see that they are older than men at all three certification levels - apprentice, level I and level II. On average, women are five years older than men in the apprentice category; they are five years older than men in the level I category and one year older than men in the level II category. The average age of women apprentices is 37 years, the average of level I's is 42 years, and the average of level II's is 45 years. At the apprentice level, the largest group of women are in the 35 - 44 age group. Table #9 indicates that the youngest women at all three certification levels are in 2H/2J (31 years, 38 years and 41 years respectively), while the oldest are in 3Pn (41 years, 46 years, and 47 years respectively) although, at 46, the average age of women at level II in 3L and 3Ps is close.

When we look at the age of male apprentices, we see that the largest group of apprentices are at the age where one would expect apprentices to be - in the 15 - 24 age range although the average age of male apprentices is much higher at 32 years. The average age of men at level I is 37 years, and the average age of level II's is 44 years. From Table #9 we see that the youngest male apprentices are in 2H/2J (28 years) and the oldest are in 3Pn (35 years). The youngest level I's are in 3K (33 years) and the oldest are again in 3Pn (45 years). The youngest males at Level II are in 2H/2J (42 years) and the oldest are in 3Pn and 3Ps (45 years).

Given that many older fish harvesters likely sought buyout packages after the moratoria on groundfish were announced in 1992 and 1994, it is not surprising that the majority of fishery workers would be in the 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 age groups. Only 9.4% of the workforce is 55 years old or older. Fish harvesters between the ages of 35 and 54 are not likely to leave the fishery any time soon because, as one woman said, "[the government] got to realize that we got families so people like us who are forty or fifty, we can't up and start all over again and we're too young to retire."

Age Analysis of Fish Harvesters* by Certification Level and Gender										
Age Range	Apprentices (%)		Level I (%)		Level 2 (%)		Total	% of Total	% in age range among Females (n=2765)	% in age range among Males (n=11,515)
	F	M	F	M	F	M				
15-24	251	1173	2	107	2	52	1587	11.1	9.2	11.6
25-34	532	779	80	304	67	1419	3181	22.3	24.5	21.7
35-44	554	536	117	162	229	2799	4397	30.8	32.5	30.4
45-54	382	353	100	90	294	2547	3766	26.4	28	26
55-64	62	133	20	31	72	807	1125	7.9	5.5	8.4
65 & over	0	38	0	14	1	171	224	1.5	0.3	1.9
Avg. age	37	32	42	37	45	44				
Total	1781 (64.5%)	3012 (26%)	319 (11.5%)	708 (6%)	665 (24%)	7795 (68%)	14280	100	100	100

Table #8: Age Analysis of Fish Harvesters

Source: Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board, 2000

* age was not available for all fish harvesters and these figures do not include those given temporary certification in 2000.

Age Analysis of Male Fish Harvesters by NAFO Zone and Level of Certification																		
Age Range	2H/2J*			3K			3L			3Pn			3Ps			4R		
	App	Lev I	Lev II	App	Lev I	Lev II	App	Lev I	Lev II	App	Lev I	Lev II	App	Lev I	Lev II	App	Lev I	Lev II
15-24	30	2	3	262	32	11	420	38	20	14	0	0	290	17	10	157	18	8
25-34	18	14	80	167	84	370	246	91	470	16	2	21	227	73	270	105	40	208
35-44	4	5	101	114	37	716	191	50	906	7	4	50	124	37	501	96	29	525
45-54	3	2	66	59	15	553	144	40	806	9	4	66	86	22	622	52	7	434
55-64	0	1	7	24	3	145	54	8	246	4	3	15	35	6	243	16	10	151
65 & up	0	0	5	6	2	36	7	2	56	1	0	2	13	6	35	11	4	37
Av. Age	28	34	42	31	33	43	32	35	43	35	45	45	32	36	45	33	37	44
Total	55	24	262	632	173	1831	1062	229	2504	51	13	154	775	161	1681	437	108	1363

Age Analysis of Female Fish Harvesters by NAFO Zone and Level of Certification																		
Age Range	2H/2J*			3K			3L			3Pn			3Ps			4R		
	App	Lev I	Lev II	App	Lev I	Lev II	App	Lev I	Lev II	App	Lev I	Lev II	App	Lev I	Lev II	App	Lev I	Lev II
15-24	10	0	0	48	0	0	68	1	0	0	0	0	97	1	2	28	0	0
25-34	11	4	4	149	32	21	131	17	11	10	0	0	166	14	20	65	13	11
35-44	7	4	9	142	34	62	158	22	53	19	4	0	151	31	51	77	22	54
45-54	2	2	5	82	19	69	134	25	77	13	4	1	89	28	87	62	22	55
55-64	1	0	1	13	8	20	17	4	13	1	0	0	19	6	25	11	2	13
65 & up	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Av. Age	31	38	41	37	40	45	38	42	46	41	46	47	35	43	46	39	41	45
Total	31	10	19	434	93	172	508	69	155	43	8	1	522	80	185	243	59	133

* Note: includes NLCF (Northern Labrador Core Fishers)

Table #9: Detailed Age Analysis of Fish Harvesters by Gender, NAFO Zone and Certification Level – Newfoundland and Labrador

Source: Professional Fish Harvesters of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2000.

What will happen to the inshore fishery when these harvesters leave? I asked the women I interviewed if they were encouraging their children to become involved in the fishery. Of the fifteen women who have children, only two had encouraged their children when they said they wanted to work at fishing. One child was a daughter and one a son. Women's determination that their children will do other types of work is not confined to women fish harvesters. A similar response was documented by Neis *et al.* (2001, 90) in their research with women fish processors on the east coast of Newfoundland.

Two women who said they would not encourage their children to be in the fishery are working with their children as crew members on their boats. Children in fishing families learn a way of life from being around boats and fishing and women know that this lifestyle becomes attractive to some of them: "I got two boys and everything is boats and water and honest to God I do pray that they don't get involved in the fishery." Most women echoed this woman's concern and they are adamant that their children stay away from fishery work:

My kids can make their career decisions when the time comes but right now my biggest problem ... my concern here is that my kids are not going to be in that boat. If I got anything to do with it, this is one time I'll have my way and they're not going to be in no boat. Once they get out on their own I can't control that but right now we do not look at the fishery – less you want to be a marine biologist, that's fine (01-02-14).

Due to the lack of alternative employment in rural communities and the effect of fisheries restructuring on small fishing enterprises, fishing is one of the most realistic employment possibilities for women who do not live near an urban center and/or have a

strong post-secondary education. One woman used these reasons when she encouraged her daughter to go fishing with her husband:

She saw me doing it and then she said, "You know I should do the same thing." So I said, "If you'd like to do it instead of him getting somebody else to fish that he got to pay for, you take the job." It would bring more money into the household because they don't have to pay somebody else outside of the family. The way it is today everything is so expensive. You just can't afford to pay somebody else. She saw that I could do it and I loved it. She said, "Mom, if you can do it I should be able to do it too" and I said, "My dear, that's up to you." That was 1993 and she started right after I did (02-01-05)

Even though most women are not encouraging their daughters to go fishing, five said their daughters, still of school age, go fishing with them during the summer months. One was only eleven years old and her mother said she loved fishing. Another woman said:

FH: With my children, well neither one of the boys wanted to go fishing ... Now [my daughter] loves the water. She loves being out in boats and she goes out a lot. If lobster fishing was open tomorrow and we were getting ready to go, she'd be saying, "Dad, can I ask to get a couple of days off school so I can go out with you?" So there you go – you don't know. She might do something with marine biology at the University.

I: And that would be more acceptable to you?

FH: Yes. She might be a DFO scientist one day. I can imagine the conversations that would go on around this kitchen table with me and [my husband] trying to talk some sense into her and her not believing a word we're saying (02-010-07).

While women do not want their children dependent on the fishery for a living, they will defend their right to be there. As we have seen, sometimes the children want to work in the fishery. For the women in this study, occasionally this means standing up for

women's rights, for their young daughters' right to be fish harvesters. Where this takes them only time will tell:

FH: My 15-year-old [daughter] is just as strong as any man. She also goes crab fishing with [my husband] and I tell you, she's wicked. I guess we'll have to pass her down the license. She just asked to go. See the way [my husband] is, he'd prefer to have a man but the thing is, I said to him, "If she wants to do it, let her do it. Let her try and if she finds it too hard, she don't have to go back."

I: Do you encourage your children to work in the fishery?

FH: No.

I: But your daughter is anyway?

FH: I don't hold it against her. If she wants to go she can go but I would rather if she didn't. There's better work in this workplace than fishing. ... I leave the choices to them. 'If they want to go fishing they can go fishing. When [my daughter] is out crab fishing with [my husband and the crew], she lets the guys haul their lines but then she has to do the sorting and the lifting of pans of crab. With cod, she helps haul the nets. The three girls have been fishing and they've all enjoy it and they've all done as well as the men. A lot of men can't believe that women can do this stuff (02-05-02).

5.6 Conclusions

Women's presence in fishing boats does not mean that they are accessing training and advancing in professionalization on an equal basis with men. Some women talked about not being taught the full range of skills they need to know in order to feel safe and competent on the water. Most obvious are the lack of navigational and mechanical skills and the risks that some women are taking by operating boats without these skills. However, skills can be gained through training, which some of these women will need

anyway if they are going to advance in the professionalized fish harvester workforce. Many women said they needed training in all sorts of areas from bookkeeping to basic engine maintenance and, with the right supports, would love to take it.

The institutional barriers to them taking training, including those resulting from the shift to professionalization, women's historical marginalization in fishing, and their own limiting sense of themselves as 'helpers,' present formidable barriers that need to be challenged by women and fisheries institutions. These barriers have increased with the restructuring of the post-secondary education system and have made it very difficult for women (and for men as well) to access affordable training in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. With women making up 37% of apprentice fish harvesters and 31% of level Is, the PFHCB should make outreach initiatives to them a priority in order to help overcome their lack of connection with professionalization processes.

The implications for women's health are that some of them are not learning the skills they need to know, either on-the-job or through more formal avenues, to be safe on the water. At a more fundamental level, their continued marginalization in the fishery through restrictions on their learning not only places them at risk and undermines their health, but also affects their ability to be fully autonomous human beings.

The discourses associated with the restructured fishery and professionalization on the one hand, and women's struggle for recognition as fish harvesters and managers of fishing households on the other, present a number of conflicting and contradictory ideas. These discourses assume a self-sustaining hierarchical 'fishing enterprise' headed by an

organizationally-active professional fisherman who holds multiple licenses. However, this vision of the fishery ignores women's work as fish harvesters, and the complex responsibilities for paid and unpaid work they do for the fishing enterprises in their homes and their communities. As Anne Witz (1992) has shown, historical patterns in professionalization show that they marginalize women's work while raising the status of work done by men. While aiming to keep out 'moonlighters,' fisheries professionalization may continue patterns established with fisheries rationalization, where women's work in fish processing was deemed to be unproductive, inefficient, and unnecessary.

In 2000, the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board gave certification to 3,116 women (2,815 were given regular certification and 301 were given temporary certification). Women made up thirty-seven percent of all apprentices, 31% of level Is, and 8% of level IIs. When we look at the breakdown among women we see that 65% of all women fish harvesters are at the apprentice level, 11% are at level I, and 24% are at Level II. Overall, women make up 20% of fish harvesters in the province. If we assume that 90% of these women are wives fishing with their husbands who are license holders, then women's work on fishing boats is supporting over 50% of these fishing households. Indeed, women's work as fish harvesters may be 'between life and death' for many families in the inshore fishery.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

Since the late 1980s, the decline in groundfish stocks, the subsequent moratoria, related loss of employment and out-migration have defined the lives of people in fishery-dependent areas of rural Newfoundland and Labrador. For the fishery workers lucky enough to remain fishing during and since the moratoria, their work and way of life has changed forever.

The moratoria acted as a catalyst for major restructuring within the Newfoundland and Labrador's fisheries. At the policy level, this restructuring has been driven by a belief that there are "too many fishermen catching too few fish." The main solution to this problem is believed to involve decreasing the number of fish harvesters, processing workers, and plants by means of limiting access to processing and harvesting licenses, changing and tightening policies related to EI, privatization, and offloading of fishery related expenses onto industry, communities and fish harvesters. At the core of fisheries rationalization exists enclosure policies that restrict access to fish stocks understood to have been previously 'common property,' increased emphasis on the professional 'entrepreneur' fish harvester, and increased market control within the industry (McKay, 1995; Munk-Madsen, 1998, 229; Neis and Williams, 1997, 48).

This thesis explores some of the effects of fisheries restructuring on the lives and health of women fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador. It studies issues related to their changing work environment, workload and work responsibilities, work relations, professionalization and training, and their occupational health and safety. The social

determinants of health approach forms the broad analytical framework and this approach is further enhanced with a social ecological perspective, post-structuralism, and a gender analysis.

6.1 Restructuring and Women's Health

This research has allowed me to explore some of the links between restructuring and the lives and health of women fish harvesters in Newfoundland and Labrador. Historically, women in fishing households have done both ground crew tasks and worked as crew members on inshore boats. While governments and institutions have kept women's work invisible and uncompensated, women have always taken an active role in ensuring the success of fishing enterprises. With the current wave of restructuring, women in small boat fishing households have once again stepped up their efforts to secure family incomes from fishing. Since the 1980s, while men have been exiting the industry to retire or seek work elsewhere, the number of women working on fishing boats has increased dramatically. Fisheries and EI restructuring have created an environment where lower real incomes coming into households, higher cost of living, and the lack of onshore jobs for women in fish processing and other areas since the moratoria, have acted as a catalyst for women to derive incomes from fishing (Neis, 1997, 48; Neis and Grzetic, 2000). In 1981 there were 1,480 women reporting an income from fishing, representing 8% of the fish harvester workforce. By 2000, PFHCB data indicate that 3,097 women were given certification to fish, making up 20% of the fish harvester workforce. This represents a 12% increase between 1981 and 2000 although most of that increase seems

to have taken place during the 1980s when the groundfish started to decline. During the same period, the number of male fish harvesters has been steadily decreasing. In 1981, 15,900 men reported an income from fishing. By 1990 that figure had decreased to 13,880 and by 2000, it had decreased further as only 12,656 were given certification to fish. This represents an overall decrease of over 26% since 1981.

Analysis of PFHCB data indicate that in 2000, while women made up 20% of the fish harvester workforce, they were concentrated at the lower level of certification. They made up 37% of all fish harvesters at the apprentice level, 31% of those at level I and 8% of those at level II. Looking at the breakdown among women in 2000, 65% of all women were at the apprentice level, 11% were at level I and 24% were at level II. This contrasts with the men where 27% of all men were apprentices, 6% were at level I and 67% were at level II.

Some women interviewed felt that the increasing trend in women fishing will continue as fish stocks become more scarce, costs associated with fishing continue to increase, and access to fish becomes more restricted. Women also felt that increasing monitoring and pressures from stigmas related to EI would ensure that women be *seen* to be fishing thereby further increasing their presence on the water.

This research shows that women's increasing involvement in fish harvesting and fisheries and EI restructuring pose certain threats to women's health. These are the result of changes to their work environments, stigmas associated with their work, workloads and responsibilities, work relations, the fit between their skills and the skill requirements of their jobs, and professionalization and training measures. A policy environment that has

ignored the relationship between health and gender, work environment, physical environment, education and training, and social support has put the health of all fish harvesters at risk. Women are particularly at risk in such an environment.

The work environment for inshore fish harvesters has changed dramatically over the past ten years. One major change is that the fishery has become a very expensive place to make a living. Women talked about increased uncertainty over the size of their catches and whether in fact they may even get a catch. For some species such as crab, some fish harvesters have to enter a draw. Many fish harvesters work part-time and when they are allowed to fish, they work more intensely, appear to spend more time on the water each day, and fish multiple species. At times, they also feel forced to go on the water during bad weather in small open boats. They have frequent down times throughout the summer when they are not allowed to fish and may have no incomes at all. Women also talked about the stressful effects of the multitude of rules and multitude of organizations all wanting a voice in establishing those rules.

One aspect of fisheries restructuring dealt with in some depth in this research is professionalization. Professionalization is a social workforce trend and therefore needs to be viewed with a gender lens. Put in place ostensibly to restrict fish harvesting to those who meet established guidelines for full-time harvesters (and to keep out moonlighters), and to improve the status of the occupation and the safety of fish harvesters, it contains a vision of a professional fish harvester who is a formally trained *male fisherman* in a fishing enterprise that is abstracted from the fishing family. While the effects of professionalization have yet to be fully realized, such conflicting notions of workers in the

inshore fishery have caused women problems in the past and will likely cause them some problems in the fishery of the future. Another area of difficulty relates to access and the costs of professionalization training. At \$125.00 per day for training delivered by the Marine Institute, it will be very difficult for women (and many men) harvesters to access such training and advance in the professionalization process. All these issues impact on women's future employment in the industry, their access to fishery stocks, learning opportunities, and their health and safety as fishery workers.

Most women fish harvesters interviewed in this research work mainly with their husbands in small, inshore fishing boats. Many of them said they had never expected to become fish harvesters, but have learned to adjust to their new roles and will likely remain working at it for some time. For some women with young children, adjusting to being away from home early in the morning and on special occasions has been particularly difficult. Adjusting to having both parents fishing has no doubt been difficult for children also at times.

Most women described having a cooperative relationship with their husbands and co-workers aboard the boats and this was a common reason why they enjoyed fishing. Getting along with their husbands was extremely important for all these women. As one woman said, "It's between life and death."

Aside from their regular fishing duties aboard the boat, some women have also taken sole responsibility for safety aboard the boat, again positioning themselves 'between life and death.' The following woman describes her husband's reaction to her role.

I'm always preaching safety aboard the boat. [My husband] says I'm going to have him drove crazy because I'm always at it. I see things and I says we should call it a day. It was only normal for him where he fished with his father to take so many chances. Right now he understands and wears a life jacket (01-01-12).

Some women have benefitted from having husbands, co-workers, friends and family around them who clearly do not have intransigent views on the gender of the workforce and women's place in it. Regardless, most of these women know there are limits to their support and do not venture too far into institutional domains outside the household. They have been taught the skills they need for their immediate duties aboard the boat and over the years some of them have learned new skills. They feel good about the contribution they are making to their household incomes. Their harvesting incomes have helped them cope with the increasing expenses associated with fisheries restructuring and the restructuring of social programs including post-secondary education since the 1980s. For many women in this study, their incomes from harvesting have meant the difference 'between life and death' for these fishing enterprises.

The majority of these women are in the 35 to 44 age group. The average age of women apprentices is 37, whereas the average age of men apprentices is 32. With the closure of many fish plants, these women, who have little or no post-secondary education, must compete with younger and more educated workers for the few non-fishery related jobs available in their rural communities. Thus, while many of these women may have felt pushed into going fishing, it appears that fishing, to some extent, also *fits* their needs as well. Over time, these women may have struggled to improve that fit by drawing on supports close to them in their communities and aboard the boats, by insisting that their

on-the-job training needs be met in order to learn the skills related to their work, by taking responsibility for safety issues aboard the boat, and by insisting on their right, and their daughters' right, to work aboard fishing boats.

The increasing presence of women aboard fishing boats does not mean there is equality between the women and men who fish. Very few women actually hold fishing licenses: women are 2.2% of license holders and they hold 1.6% of licenses. Many of the women interviewed described a number of challenges in their work. They see themselves in 'helper' roles and are often restricted to certain tasks aboard the boat for reasons that relate in large part to gender norms and stereotypes about women and work. Many of them are not pursuing fisheries training through formal avenues while, at the same time, they describe important aspects of their work that they are not learning on-the-job such as navigation and engine maintenance. Many women are exposed to condescending stigmas by government, industry, and members of their communities both concerning their presence as women on fishing boats and about their supposed abuse of the EI system.

During the fishing season these women carry a tremendous workload – doing ground crew work for the fishing enterprise, taking care of the home and children, and taking care of elderly people nearby. While many of these women say they enjoy their work on fishing boats, they feel the pressure of the constant and conflicting demands on their time associated with their triple workload and its subsequent effects on their health. When combined with the increasing uncertainty and loss of control over their fishing work, increasing expenses in recent years, and anxiety about safety, some women describe explicitly increasing stress and anxiety in their daily lives. This is especially the case for

those women in the study who have children at home or in college.

Their greatest sources of stress were the direct result of policies they perceive as threatening the sustainability of the stocks and in turn, their incomes. Women's health and the health and well-being of their families and communities depend on the health of the fish stocks. If those stocks are continually mismanaged or managed in such a way that does not allow first for sustainability and second, a balance between the safety and economic needs of the inshore fish harvesters, then the lives and livelihood of all inshore fishing families will be threatened. While women attribute most of this added stress and some related health problems to fisheries management policies, they also said that it was not only DFO, but all the fisheries institutions that influence decisions related to fisheries management that were playing a role in compromising stocks and promoting stress and risk in their lives.

Some women talked about feeling better both emotionally and physically during the fishing season because they are more active physically and because they are out in the fresh air all day. But their work aboard the boats is also wearing on them physically. Many of them have experienced multiple injuries and have been diagnosed with multiple conditions in recent years. Musculoskeletal problems, especially arthritis, and urinary tract infections (possibly due to the lack of toilet facilities), are two of the most commonly reported physical problems.

6.2 Reflections on Theory and Methods

While my primary goal with this research was to attempt to understand the effects of restructuring on women's health, at the same time, I was also exploring alternative ways to study this important issue. For me, an effective analytical framework must suit the issues I am trying to study. I used the social determinants of health approach as a broad framework, but this was enhanced with elements from a social ecological approach (Stokols, 1996) and a feminist post-structuralist analysis (Moore, 1994, Sherwin, 1998, Wajcman, 1991). This framework allowed me to explore issues related to people, policies, language, gender and environment central to this research. In almost every aspect under study, especially the work and learning dynamics in the restructured fisheries and certain aspects of professionalization, the links between gender and environment emerge as critically important determinants of women's health.

The use of post-structuralism in this thesis helped problematize the use of language and the multiple meanings and complexity of terms such as fish harvester, safety, risks, and violence. Beginning with my early question, "Can you tell me what you call yourself?" the complexity of terms described by the women challenged common understandings of fishery issues and became a central and fascinating aspect of this research.

Following the lead of researchers such as Lesley Doyal (1999), Patti Lather (1991), and Ian Scoones (1999), I used both qualitative and quantitative components in this research. The primary data source and the real strength of this research came from the in-depth interviews done with sixteen women fish harvesters. From those interviews, the major themes were identified and used to build an understanding of the relationship

between environmental, industrial and policy restructuring and women's health. The use of quantitative data helped provide a more broad and in-depth gender analysis of women's position in the fish harvesters workforce, professionalization initiatives, access to fishing licenses, and fisheries-related training initiatives. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data was useful in presenting both an in-depth exploration of women's work, learning and health in fishing as well as some more general statistics on women's participation in the fish harvester workforce in Newfoundland and Labrador.

An interesting aspect of the methodology in this research was the feedback from women who read a draft of this thesis. Six women reviewed it and in phone conversations afterwards, said overwhelmingly positive things about it. They felt they learned from it, especially on issues related to professionalization, and were very excited to see their work as fish harvesters acknowledged in positive ways. They said that by reading the thesis, they realized the connections they had with other women who fish and they commented that these women in other communities had many experiences similar to their own. One woman disagreed with certain comments made by some women such as those about the Sentinel fishery. The feedback process gave her the opportunity to present her views on this matter.

Many of the women requested that copies of the thesis be sent to their local libraries where they and others can access it and read about their lives as fish harvesters. One woman said she did not care much for the sections of the thesis where women said they cried when the weather would suddenly turn bad while they were on the water. Another woman wondered how the union was going to respond to this research. Others

said they recognized how important it is for women to speak out on certain issues that need to be addressed such as medical insurance and training. They remain adamant that women's work as fish harvesters be recognized and compensated fairly. Since the time I did the interviews with these women, another woman's daughter decided that she wanted to be a fish harvester and fished with them all last season.

The emphasis on narrative analysis in this research, which I interpret as a feminist post-structuralist analysis of women's stories (Bloom, 1998), helped reveal the historical embeddedness of women's lives and identities and the ways they struggle to overcome obstacles to their autonomy. As Bloom (1998) argues, narrative analysis helps draw out the discourses central to women's stories about their lives and can promote a positive view of women's identities as nonunitary, fragmented, conflicted, fluid, and in flux. A great range of meanings are present in women's narratives. In terms of safety, women challenged narrow concepts of the terms and the effectiveness of an individualized approach to safety training when they no longer get to decide when they go fishing. Other multiple meanings and conflicting views raised in this thesis relate to professionalization (Who is a fish harvester?), risk and violence. There are connections between our understanding of who a fish harvester is and women's safety aboard fishing vessels. Clearly, if women are not seen as an important part of the workforce by people in institutions such as the FFAW, DFO, the Marine Institute and the PFHCB, women's reputation as fishery workers, their formal and informal learning, and their health and safety will be compromised. The issue of violence was explored and encompassed violence directly targeted at women, as well as aggressive harvesting practices and the

destruction of fish stocks.

A post-structuralist analysis of women's narratives helped highlight the master narratives and reveal the constructed nature of inequality both in terms of the environment and women's daily experiences – of living and working in a world that is dominated by male interests – and the effects of gendered social structures on their identities, their health, and the health of the fish stocks.

Feminist narrative analysis also helped to develop an understanding of issues related to access, fit and quality in an environment of ongoing restructuring in the Newfoundland fisheries. It helps reveal power and gender issues in discourses and practices, and some of the ways these discourses construct and perpetuate inequality in women's lives. As the individual interviews progressed, and as a comparison across interviews and with the quantitative data became possible, the multiple layers of factors that affect women's health became clear. Their narratives indicate a conception of health that, like autonomy, is viewed relationally. These relational aspects reflect women's embeddedness in inshore fishing families and in rural communities that are increasingly at the mercy of outside forces, their marginalized status and its implications for their health and well being, and their financial dependence on their husbands and, increasingly, their husbands' financial dependence on them.

While narrative analysis is used more and more in health research, its use is still largely subsumed by research that gives priority to quantitative, statistical or survey data looking for patterns and relationships between variables across large groups and populations. One of the strengths of the population health approach is its ability to focus

on the health of smaller groups of people such as women fish harvesters and the opportunities it provides to understand more clearly, the links between health and the dynamics of inequality. The use of narratives is invaluable in advancing our understanding of the nonlinear relationships between health and society within smaller groups, particularly those known to be marginalized within larger populations. Narratives can also help us to identify not only inequalities but also possible strategies for eliminating them. I feel this is a major contribution of this research towards the study of restructuring and health.

The ideas of Henrietta Moore helped me explain the relationship between the social construction of gender difference and the gender dimensions of women's work in the inshore fisheries and women's health. Giving priority to the construction of gender difference in discourses and practices associated with fishery work and restructuring helps reveal some of the ways that women's skills and needs are downplayed and ignored, and their autonomy often compromised by institutional practices. Such practices sometimes result in women losing their autonomy over major areas of their work lives. Their choices are often made for them well in advance of any action on their part. In addition, their presence and visibility in the industry are undermined, as well as their training, safety, and other work-related needs. Many of the adverse effects on women's health revealed in this study were the result of social and structural inequalities which research has shown to compromise people's health (Doyal, 1999, Messing, 1998).

The stigmatization of women fish harvesters acts as a threat, a constant reminder to them to behave *properly* and to comply with the rules that reinforce their

marginalization. They are also a constant reminder that whatever they do, women's place among fish harvesters is questionable and vulnerable. It is through acts such as stigmatizing, and the lack of attention to their needs at work, that many of the ideas about women and work and the sexual division of labour are perpetuated and made to seem 'natural.' Certainly, Fisheries EI has been designed around a set of assumptions about women that reinforce male dominance in the fishery and in the household. Fisheries EI discourses intersect with localized gendered assumptions about women's place in society and in the fishery. These discourses naturalize the division of women's and men's jobs and increase the potential for women to be put at risk. They form an ideological basis for Fisheries EI and treat women's association with the fishery as both marginal and unpaid.

At the root of dominant discourses about women and work is a controlled and constrained role for women rooted in nature. Such discourses overlap with ideas about femininity that attempt to control women's exposure to 'dirty' work and 'rough' weather under the familiar guise of protection. These discourses position women as natural mothers, wives, and carers, dependent on a male breadwinner even when male incomes cannot sustain the household. They insist that their primary job is in the home – cooking, cleaning, raising children and managing the household which is financially dependant on a male. When women work outside the home, their interest in such work is seen to be secondary to their main responsibilities in the home. While they may work outside the home, they still retain most of the responsibility for caring work in and around the home.

In the fishing industry, dominant discourses portray women fish harvesters as temporary workers who are not really serious fish harvesters: "They are only doing it for

their EI.” The belief is that there is no need to invest in their learning – informally or formally. There is no need for these women to take expensive training, and when the fishery returns to ‘normal,’ they will go back in the home or get a job on land. It is often assumed that these women do not want to learn technical skills such as navigation and engine maintenance, that they have no aptitude for technical skills, and are not good at technical jobs.

Henrietta Moore reminds us that, “discourses about gender and gender categories are not powerful because they provide accurate descriptions of social practices and experiences, but rather because, amongst other things, they engender women and men as persons who *are* defined by difference” (1994, 51). The difference between women and men – and women’s subordinate status relative to men’s dominant status – is reinforced every day through acts such as segregating the work women do, restricting their learning on the water and in institutions, challenging them in public through outright confrontation, undermining their reputations through the use of stigmas, and insisting that women’s place is in the home as mothers and carers.

6.3 Recommendations for Change

The role of women fish harvesters has been largely invisible to fisheries organizations, governments, and a large portion of the public. As long as the work done by women fish harvesters remains invisible, they will be vulnerable to accusations of EI abuse and/or EI fraud and will confront unnecessary risks to their employment, incomes, and health and safety. It will take a concerted effort by many people and institutions to

overcome their marginalization and its consequences. The following are some recommended areas where change is needed immediately.

1. Organizations such as The DFO, PFHCB, the FFAW, the Marine Institute, and others must increase their efforts to understand the links between their policies and practices and women's health. The DFO, which has contributed to women's invisibility by refusing to keep gender-disaggregated license data, must revisit this decision.

All these organizations must work together to ensure that their policies and practices do not adversely affect the safety of all fish harvesters. Improving working conditions and safety for inshore fish harvesters – both women and men – requires developing and implementing more safety-conscious fisheries management policies. A recent report by DFO – Coast Guard addresses this issue as well and recommends that management changes in conservation, licensing, allocation and access as well as vessel replacement policies be studied for their possible effects on safety (2000, 21). This thesis research shows that the current practices associated with cod allocations and seasonal overlaps for the various species are causing major problems for small boat, inshore fish harvesters.

2. Also of great importance in terms of safety, is the need to address barriers based on gender that restrict the scope of, and opportunities for, women's learning on-the-job. While we can say that women's learning at work is slowly improving, it would also be fair to say that they have been, to a large extent, on their own in that struggle. Outside their circle of friends and family, these women do not have much

support for their work as fish harvesters. This is especially true of formal fisheries institutions which many women have stayed away from, or have withdrawn from, in recent years. As long as women are treated as second class workers whose *real* job is in the home and in uncompensated shore-related work for the fishing enterprise, there will be a number of women working in a dying profession in conditions made more dangerous on a daily basis. They will continue to work this way because they have no other choice. This is the legacy of oppression, the material and psychological impact of women's historical marginalization in the fishing industry.

3. Women's participation in the fishing industry presents some particular opportunities and challenges for women fish harvesters, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board, the FFAW union, and the post-secondary education system in relation to their approach to formal fisheries training in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. In order to secure women's future in harvesting and enhance their learning and health, there have to be increased efforts by all those involved, to improve women's visibility and their reputation as fishery workers.
4. Women have to be acknowledged as serious fishery workers whose work responsibilities and health concerns may, at times, be different from men's, but real none the less. The PFHCB needs to review the professionalization processes in order to accommodate women's needs as fish harvesters. This may mean establishing new criteria for 'part-time' fish harvesters who depend on the fishery

- for their livelihood, improving the representation of women in their governing structures, and doing outreach specifically targeted at women.
5. The vision of a professional fish harvester that is guiding professionalization and its related initiatives such as PLAR, is highly male biased and needs to be challenged and recognized as biased by the PFHCB. Advancing in fisheries professionalization depends on access to well-funded training for fish harvesters. Professionalization seems to have exacerbated the pre-existing problems related to fisheries training for male and female fish harvesters throughout the province, especially in the more rural areas. Training is too costly and inaccessible, and training structures for identifying skills and skill gaps are biased in favour of skills related to men's work.
 6. The post-secondary education system including, in particular, the Marine Institute, has distanced itself more and more from seriously addressing the training needs of fish harvesters in rural Newfoundland and Labrador. As these institutions have restructured due to privatization and changes in the transfer of public funds, the training needs of fish harvesters have become less important and the focus of the Marine Institute has shifted to other priorities. Most women in this study who entered in the fishery during the late 1980s and 1990s said they have not had access to *any* fisheries training. There is clearly a need for the Marine Institute to return to their original objective of fisheries training for the people in Newfoundland and Labrador.
 7. Contrary to their main goals and to their credit, the PFHCB seem to have

recognized some of the problems with the delivery of fisheries training and a professionalization scheme that is dependent upon expensive training. They have taken the lead in developing initiatives to try and overcome some of the problems. The current delivery in rural communities of the Basic Safety course for apprentices is a good example of an educational initiative driven by the Board.

However, what is really required is a system-wide long-term solution. Educational institutions, the provincial Department of Education, the FFAW, and the PFHCB must work together to restructure their entire approach to fisheries training. The administration and delivery of much of the training at the Marine Institute in St. John's: the cost of training, the biased use of PLAR, and the lack of outreach are just some areas that are highly problematic for all fish harvesters, but especially for women.

8. The FFAW must create a variety of opportunities to bring together more and more women fish harvesters from around the province to involve them in labour organizing and help reduce their isolation. The FFAW must learn more about the issues affecting women fish harvesters, advocate for them, and develop strategies for putting in place affordable health and pension plans for fishing families. One woman fish harvester explained that opportunities to meet and talk about issues important to them would help reduce their invisibility and isolation.

As for the fisherwomen, there's no organization out there for us. We're under the umbrella of fish harvesters. Like, for the most part, they recognize that we're there but we're even struggling with the names. ... So we've always been recognized as being there but we're totally invisible.

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large proportion of women in the professionalization process who are apprentices and level Is, future work with women should focus on developing supports to ensure their particular training and advancement needs are met. Sixty-five percent of women fish harvesters in the province are certified at the apprentice level and women make up 37% of all apprentices. They will have to take training in order to advance to higher levels of certification where they might possibly obtain fishing licenses and more security for themselves and their families.

I hope this thesis helps bring attention to some of the ways fisheries restructuring is affecting women fish harvesters, the effects of institutional policies and practices on their health and well-being and the importance of women's involvement in fishery-related institutions and organizations. I am not talking about involving a token woman here and another there in these institutions and structures. Rather, I am suggesting major changes in how workers in fisheries institutions and government do their jobs – by inviting women into the processes, programs, meetings, boardrooms, and classrooms and ensuring their long-term involvement in all issues related to fishing and fisheries policies, and by considering the health impacts of policies and practices that may not on the surface, appear to be health-related and gender-related. Fisheries institutions need to work to create a respectful space for women fish harvesters and to promote their rights and needs in relation to their future employment, incomes and health. They also must work together to protect fish stocks. I hope that people in fisheries and government institutions will make a strategic effort to reach out to these women as serious and important workers with much to contribute to fishing and fishery policies.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

How far was this from your home? What were your responsibilities in this job?

Did you work with any men in this job? Explain.

Did you do the same work as men?

Did you work alongside men?

IF YES, did (do) you feel comfortable working alongside men? Doing the same job as men?

Was this job full-time / part-time / contractual
year-round or seasonal: _____ number of weeks/year _____
shift-work: _____
unionized or not: _____

skills required:

work hazards:

Were you ever injured while working in this job?

If yes, Did you report this injury to Worker's Compensation?

What was it for?

What was the outcome?

How long did you stay at this job?

What did you like/dislike about this job?

Why did you leave this job?

Your second job?

Can you describe what your second job was like?

Why did you decide to take it? Where was it located?

How far was this from your home?

What were your responsibilities in this job?

Did you work with any men in this job? Explain.

Did you do the same work as men?

Did you work alongside men?

IF YES, did (do) you feel comfortable working alongside men? Doing the same job as men?

Was this job full-time / part-time / contractual _____
 year-round or seasonal: _____ number of weeks/year _____
 shift-work: _____
 unionized or not: _____
 skills required:

work hazards:

Were you ever injured while working in this job?

If yes, Did you report this injury to Worker's Compensation?

What was it for?

What was the outcome?

How long did you stay at this job?

What did you like/dislike about this job?

Why did you leave this job?

And your third job?

Can you describe for me what your third job was like?

Why did you seek this line of work? Why did you decide to take it? Where was it located?

How far was this from your home?

What were your responsibilities in this job?

Did you work with any men in this job? Explain.

Did you do the same work as men?

Did you work alongside men?

IF YES, did (do) you feel comfortable working alongside men? Doing the same job as men?

Was this job full-time / part-time / contractual _____

year-round or seasonal: _____ number of weeks/year _____

shift-work: _____

unionized or not: _____

skills required:

work hazards:

Were you ever injured while working in this job?

If yes, Did you report this injury to Worker's Compensation?

What was it for?

What was the outcome?

How long did you stay at this job?

What did you like/dislike about this job?

Why did you leave this job?

Current Work Experiences:

What is your current job?

Your current status in the fishery?

How long have you been in this job?

At present, do you always work with your spouse (or a relative)?

How did you come to be doing this type of work? Whose idea was it?

What is a typical working day like for you? What are your responsibilities in this job?

How do you feel about this job? Likes and dislikes, future opportunities ...

What would you like to see changed? How would you like to see these changes come about?

(i.e. through your employer, the government, union, professionalization training).

Do you work with other male crew members in this job?

If yes, do you do the same work as these men?

When working, what are the start and end times of a typical day's work in the fishery?

Start Time? End Time?

How many hours do you normally work per week on the boat _____ on shore _____

Is this the same as the rest of the crew?

Can you describe the level of support from your co-workers with regard to your work as a woman fish harvester? Have you encountered any challenges in your job as a result of working with a (mainly) male crew?

Can you describe the level of support you get from your family for your work as a fish harvester?

Can you describe the level of support you get from your community for your work as a woman fish harvester?

Can you describe the level of support you get from fisheries organizations (DFO, your union, the Professional Fish Harvesters Association, etc.) for your work as a woman fish harvester?

How do you feel these organizations could be better meeting your needs as a woman fish harvester?

Has the downturn in the fishery affected the amount or type of work you are doing in the fishery?

Have you ever been injured while working in the fisheries?

If yes, did you report this injury to Worker's Compensation?

What was it for?

What was the outcome?

How would you describe your health at present? (Excellent, very good, good, fair, poor).

Has your health changed since you began working as a fish harvester?

If so, in what ways? Why do you think these changes have happened?

If you've encountered health problems, have you sought any help for them? What was the outcome? How will these changes in your health affect your future in the fishery?

What changes need to happen to ensure your health and well-being and the health of other women fish harvesters?

Please indicate the frequency with which your job exposes you to the following and your level of concern (Low, Medium, High) with each:

Too much heat or cold
Cold water
Poor quality air
Loud noise or vibration
Poorly Designed workspace
Poor lighting (too much/too little)
Co-workers who are intoxicated
Fire or Explosion Hazards
Litter or mess in work areas
Not enough safety training
Long hours standing
Risk of physical strain
Dangerous chemicals
Risk of eye strain
Allergens/biological agents
Unsafe equipment or machinery
Electrical Hazards
Violence in the workplace

Are there other work hazards not mentioned above?

Do you have any comments on on-the-job training and safety training at work? (adequacy, amount, gaps)

At work ... (Please respond with Never, Really, Sometimes, Often, or Always)

Can you talk to other workers while you are working?
Does your employer keep a close eye on your work?
How often do you suggest improvements in the way work is done?
How often do you have to take risks to get your job done?

Do you have anyone you can talk to about your paid work:

At home?	At work?	In the community?
<input type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no	<input type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no	<input type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no

How difficult is it for you to talk about your paid work at home?

very easy somewhat easy hard very hard

How difficult is it for you to talk about your paid work to people in your community?

very easy somewhat easy hard very hard

Would you encourage your children to work in the fishery? Please Explain.

o yes o no

What, if anything, caused you excess worry, "nerves" or stress at work in the last six months? Check all the answers that apply to you.

- | | |
|--|---|
| I changed jobs _____ | Too many changes within my job _____ |
| Too few hours _____ | Too much time pressure _____ |
| Extended hours above normal at sea _____ | Worry about children at home _____ |
| Worry about other people at home _____ | My duties conflict with one another _____ |
| Too much responsibility _____ | Employer has unrealistic expectations of me _____ |
| I don't get any feedback on how I'm doing _____ | I'm not treated fairly here _____ |
| My work tires me physically _____ | Worry about being injured at sea _____ |
| My work tires me mentally _____ | My work is stressful _____ |
| My work is boring _____ | I am being harassed by someone at work (sexually, physically or verbally) _____ |
| I am being discriminated against _____ | Conflict with other people at work _____ |
| I feel isolated from my co-workers _____ | I have difficulty speaking with other crew members _____ |
| I have difficulty understanding written instructions _____ | |
| I have difficulty getting support from my union _____ | Nothing _____ |

Show how you feel about the following statements (Agree Strongly, Agree, Not Sure, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree) ?

I am in control of my own health
I have influence over the speed at which I work
I have influence over my health at work
I have influence over my safety at work

What kind of skills are required in your job?

Do you feel you have those skills? Explain.

Do you feel your co-workers have adequate skills for their jobs? Explain.

If no, do you feel this is something that needs to be addressed? How would you like to go about learning new skills? What do you feel your co-workers should do to learn new skills?

What are your future plans with regard to your work in the fishery?

Section 2: Unpaid Work

Can you describe the kind of unpaid work you've been doing in the past both in your home and in your community?

How many dependent adults (elderly, ill, disabled) are in your household?

What is the age of these people and their relationship to you?

Age _____	Relationship _____
Age _____	Relationship _____
Age _____	Relationship _____

Do you yourself look after these adults before and/or after work?

always sometimes never

How much of your time would you say that this care requires?

a great deal of my time ___ a moderate amount of my time ___ very little of my time ___

How difficult do you find the work you have to do caring for people in your household?

very difficult somewhat difficult not difficult

If you would like a different arrangement than the one you are using now for the care of small children and/or dependent adults, please describe:

How many family members outside your home need regular care by you?

What type of care/help are you providing?

financial assistance	<input type="radio"/> yes	<input type="radio"/> no
emotional support	<input type="radio"/> yes	<input type="radio"/> no
meal preparation	<input type="radio"/> yes	<input type="radio"/> no
house cleaning	<input type="radio"/> yes	<input type="radio"/> no
home maintenance	<input type="radio"/> yes	<input type="radio"/> no
work around the garden	<input type="radio"/> yes	<input type="radio"/> no
transportation	<input type="radio"/> yes	<input type="radio"/> no
grocery shopping	<input type="radio"/> yes	<input type="radio"/> no
banking	<input type="radio"/> yes	<input type="radio"/> no
personal care	<input type="radio"/> yes	<input type="radio"/> no
other		

How much of your time would you say that this care requires?

a great deal of my time ___ a moderate amount ___ very little of my time ___

How difficult do you find this unpaid work outside your home?

very difficult

somewhat difficult

not difficult

Has the amount or type of unpaid work you do changed in recent years? If yes, how?
Why has it changed?

EDUCATION / TRAINING

What is the highest grade level you finished in school? _____ (If quit, Can you tell me why you quit school?)

Formal Education Level: _____

Did you have any thoughts about a career after high school? If you got to choose the ideal job for yourself, what would that job be?

Have you taken any skills training courses or upgrading since high school?

IF NO, go to Fisheries-related Training – page 11

IF YES:

First Training Program:

What type of course did you do?

Why did you chose this training? Was there another training program that you would have preferred to do?

Where did you do it?

What was the duration of the program?

How did you pay for it?

Was there any on-the-job training?

If yes, how adequate was this training?

How did you feel about that training program?

Did you encounter any problems while in this training program?

Did you complete this training?

If yes, what kinds of supports helped you to complete?

If no, (didn't complete), why not?

Did this training help you get any of the jobs you described above?

If yes, which one(s)?

How adequate was this training for the job you got?

Second Training Program:

What type of course did you do?

Why did you chose this training? Was there another training program that you would have preferred to do?

Where did you do it?

What was the duration of the program?

How did you pay for it?

Was there any on-the-job training?

If yes, how adequate was this training?

How did you feel about that training program?

Did you encounter any problems while in this training program?

Did you complete this training?

If yes, what kinds of supports helped you to complete?

If no, (didn't complete), why not?

Did this training help you get any of the jobs you described above?

If yes, which one(s)?

How adequate was this training for the job you got?

Fisheries-Related Training (incl. Professionalization Training):

What type(s) of fisheries-related training have you done?

If no training, why not?

Why did you choose to do this training?

How did you find out about the training program?

Where did you take the training?

What was the duration of the program?

How did you pay for it? (paid yourself, EI, etc)

Was there any on-the-job component to the training?

If yes, how adequate was this training?

How did you feel about that training program?

Did you encounter any problems while in the training program?

Did you complete the training?

If yes, what kinds of supports helped you to complete?

If no, (didn't complete), why not?

Did this training help you with any of the responsibilities you have in your current fishery work? Describe?

Are there other fishery-related training programs that you feel you would like to do in the future?

What supports need to be in place in order for you to take further fisheries-related training?

Did you ever consider, at any time, studying a trade related to the fishery such as small engine repair or diesel mechanics? Why or why not?

How do you feel about the availability of training programs for fishery workers like yourself? Is there training that you would like to do that is not offered nearby?

What are your future goals? Will you be doing further training?

Does the support currently exist within your home or your community for you to do these things?

What kinds of occupations do you feel women could/should be training for in the fisheries?

IMPACT OF THE FISHERIES RESTRUCTURING ON WORK/FAMILY LIFE AND HEALTH

What affect have the changes to the Newfoundland fishery over the past decade had on your life? Your health?

What affect have the changes to the Newfoundland fishery over the past decade had on your family? Your community? The health of people in your family and your community?

What impact has EI had on your ability to secure an income and your work in the fishery? How have the changes in EI affected you?

Describe who does what, in terms of work in your household: (Including activities such as mechanical, electrical, plumbing, carpentry, plastering, roofing, painting/wallpapering, laying carpets/linoleum/ceramic tile, working with your husband in an unpaid capacity)

- when you're working ?
- during the off season?

Can you describe how you feel about living in this community? Has this changed over time? Do you intend to remain living here?

Did your friends and neighbours help out in the past (with childcare/ exchange services)? Has this changed?

Have close friends and neighbours moved away? (where and how long ago) Has this affected the help you get? Your life in other ways?

Do you find it easier or harder to make ends meet since the moratorium?

Has the amount or type of support you receive from family and friends over the last several years changed?

At home?

At work?

Are you involved in community activities such as sports, politics, church, school or social groups? o yes o no

Please describe:

On average, how many hours a week are you involved in community activities?
 ___ hrs/week

What, if anything, caused you excess worry, "nerves" or stress at home or outside of work in the last six months? Check all the answers that apply to you.

Lack of support in my family for my decision to work as a fish harvester

Lack of support in my family for my decision to take training

Lack of support for my retraining needs at the EI office (HRDC)

Lack of support within my union for my retraining needs

Trouble getting back and forth to my training course

Lack of quality Child Care or dependent care while I'm away working

I have trouble balancing home and work responsibilities

I have too much to do

Fear about the future of my job

Change in living situation (new roommate, family member leaving)
 Change in friendship network (loss of friend, friends moving away)
 Took on a big expense
 Took on a big loan
 Trying to decide whether to stay or leave Newfoundland
 Finding a place to stay or moving to a new home
 Balancing our financial resources with our obligations
 Choosing between my needs and the needs of others
 Uncertainty about future income
 A close family member or friend has been ill or injured
 A close family member or friend has died
 Unexpected pregnancy
 I have begun a new, close relationship (including getting married)
 Divorce or separation
 Conflict with my spouse, partner, children or roommate
 Conflict with other family members (parents, grandparents, grandchildren, etc.)
 Physical abuse at home
 Verbal or emotional abuse at home
 Alcohol or drug use by a member of my family
 My own alcohol or drug use
 Nothing
 Other

HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Can you give the location of any pain you experience: (insert back/front torso diagrams)

Have you ever sought medical advice for this pain? yes no
 Do you take any medication for this pain? yes no

If yes, what:

Does this pain interfere with your paid work? explain:

Does this pain interfere with work at home? explain:

Would you describe your life as presently:

Very stressful ____ Somewhat stressful ____ Not at all stressful ____

If you compare your life now with your life before the moratorium would you say your life is:

- Much more stressful
- Somewhat more stressful
- About the same
- Somewhat less stressful
- Much less stressful

What would you say is the main sources of stress in your life?

Using the scale 1 (most of the time) to 4 (never) please respond to the following:

- How often do you feel tired during the day?
- How often do you feel short-tempered?
- How often do you feel anxious?
- Are you able to relax?
- Are you able to enjoy your normal day to day activities?
- Have you been managing to keep yourself busy and occupied?
- Have you been satisfied with the way you do things?
- Do you feel that you are playing a useful part in things?
- Do you feel capable of making decisions about things?
- Do you have a good appetite?
- How often have you been depressed in the past 8 years?

If experiencing bouts of depression:

- How long do these periods of depression normally continue?
- Have you noticed anything in particular that tends to set off these bouts of depression?

Do you currently take medication for stress, anxiety or depression? o yes o no

How many hours do you usually sleep at night? ____ hrs

How often do you wake up in the early hours of the morning?

- Very often ____ Not very often ____
- Often ____ Never ____

How often do you worry about things before you get out of bed?

- Very often ____ Not very often ____
- Often ____ Never ____

How often do you have trouble sleeping?

More than once a week _____

Once a week or less _____

Never _____

In the last month, how often did you use medication to help you sleep?

Daily, or almost every day _____

2 or 3 times a week _____

Once a week _____

2 or 3 times during the whole month _____

Once only _____

Not at all _____

How often do you contemplate not going to work because you don't feel well?

_____ More than once a week _____ Once a week or less

_____ Never

In general, how often are you so physically or mentally tired that you cannot really enjoy yourself?

_____ Very often

_____ Not very often

_____ Often

_____ Never

When you are worried, upset or under stress, how many people can you really count on to understand how you are feeling?

_____ No one

_____ 1 or more people

What kinds of activities help reduce stress in your life?

Do you have the opportunity or energy to do these things?

In a typical week, how often do you spend at least 15 minutes at a time in vigorous physical activity? Examples of such activity would be lifting, carrying, cleaning, jogging, brisk walking, sports, farm work, gardening, dancing, climbing, exercise, etc.

_____ Never

_____ Less than once a week

_____ 1 or 2 times a week

_____ 3 to 5 times a week

_____ More than 5 times a week

Do you drink alcohol?

yes

no

If yes, how much and how often _____

In your opinion, what brought on this/these conditions?

How have these health problems affected your life? (i.e. restrict the type of work you pursue, inability to work at previous job/any job, change in diet, change in income, change in caring ability, the amount of pleasurable activities you can participate in).

What, if anything, would you like to do in the next year to improve or maintain your health? Check all the answers that apply to you.

- Drink less coffee or tea _____
- Lose weight _____
- Gain weight _____
- Eat better _____
- Exercise more _____
- Remove a major source of worry, nerves or stress from my life _____
- Learn to cope better with worry, nerves or stress _____
- Change jobs _____
- Change my home situation _____
- Quit smoking, or smoke less _____
- Drink less alcohol _____
- Cut down on painkillers, sleeping or calming medications _____
- Cut down on other medications _____
- Cut down on non-medication drug use _____
- Find more effective medication _____
- Get medical treatment _____
- Have my blood pressure checked _____
- Try to control my blood pressure _____
- Nothing _____

Which, if any of these changes is likely to happen in the near future? Which are not? Why?

How do you feel about the Health Services in your area?

Do you have Health Insurance (aside from MCP)?

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORMS

Women Fish Harvesters Date:

Interview #:

My name is Brenda Grzetic and I am a student in Women's Studies at Memorial University currently doing thesis research to meet the requirements for a master's degree. I am inviting you to be a participant in this research which is entitled "**Women Fish Harvesters and the Politics of Need.**" Dr. Barbara Neis and Dr. Phyllis Artiss at Memorial University are my advisors on this research.

I am studying factors that influence the health and well-being of women fish harvesters. Health Canada lists a number of these factors such as employment, working conditions, physical environment, social environments, health services, personal health practices and coping skills, and social support networks. I am particularly interested in the movement of women into fish harvesting since the fisheries was restructured, the impact of the restructuring on women's health, and opportunities for negotiating improvements to their health and well-being at work.

One requirement of research of this kind is that participation by respondents must be voluntary and informed. By signing this form, you will be indicating to Memorial University that you have been correctly informed about the purpose of the research and have voluntarily agreed to participate. Under Memorial's ethics guidelines, you have the right to withdraw your comments at any time.

I will be asking you a broad range of questions related to your experiences of fisheries restructuring, the paid and unpaid work you have been doing, and impacts on your health. You may refuse to answer any specific questions. You should also feel free to offer opinions and information on issues or subjects not covered in the interview that you think are relevant to this research. Every attempt will be made to keep confidential the information that you provide and to protect your anonymity including your community name. The interview will be filed under a number and not your name. Interview notes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.

After the interviews are completed, I will be analysing the results and producing a draft report which I plan to mail out to women who participated for feedback. Shortly thereafter I will follow up with a phone call to discuss the draft report. This will provide another opportunity for you and others to provide input into the report and to identify potential problems with the findings. I will then write a final report. The contents of the final report will be communicated to local women's organizations, fisheries organizations, training institutions involved in fisheries professionalization training, health care professionals and policy makers through presentations and workshops. Summaries of the final report will also be available upon request by calling Brenda Grzetic at 709-437-1817. If you wish to talk to someone independent about this research, please contact Rosonna Tite, 709-737-3322, Women's Studies Programme Coordinator, Memorial University.

I hereby agree to be interviewed for the research on the health-related concerns of women fish harvesters subject to the conditions listed above.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
Phone #: _____ Mailing address: _____

Note: This research is part of a larger research project entitled 'Household and Community Strategies and Women's Health and Well-being in Resource-dependent Areas.'

Consent Form: Permission to Audiotape

Date: _____

This consent form is being used in conjunction with the previous form just reviewed. I, Brenda Grzetic, in my research on the health concerns of women fish harvesters, am asking your permission to audiotape the interview which is to follow. Audio taping is useful because it helps to ensure that all information you provide is received completely and correctly and to allow me more freedom in the interview to pay greater attention to what you tell me. Again, anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured. Once the tapes have been transcribed, they will be erased immediately. In the meantime, they will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. You are under no obligation to grant permission for audio taping. If you do not wish for the interview to be tape recorded, hand-written notes will be taken. Please feel free to request that the tape recorder be turned off at any time during the interview.

I _____ do hereby agree to be interviewed and audio taped by Brenda Grzetic in research concerning the health issues of women fish harvesters. I understand that participation is voluntary, that I may withdraw my comments at any time and that I may stop the recording of the interview at any time. All information collected is confidential and no identifying information will be included in the final report.

Date

Signature

Consent Form: Key Informants

Date: _____

My name is Brenda Grzetic and I am a student in Women's Studies at Memorial University currently doing thesis research to meet the requirements for a master's degree. I am inviting you to be a participant in this research which is entitled "**Women Fish Harvesters and the Politics of Need.**" Dr. Barbara Neis and Dr. Phyllis Artiss at Memorial University are my advisors on this research.

I am studying factors that influence the health and well-being of women fish harvesters. Health Canada lists a number of factors such as employment and working conditions, physical environment, social environments, gender, health services, personal health practices and coping skills, and social support networks as determinants of health. I am particularly interested in the movement of women into fish harvesting in recent years, the impact of this change on women's health, and opportunities for improvements to their health and well-being at work.

One requirement of research of this kind is that participation by respondents must be voluntary and informed. By signing this form, you will be indicating to Memorial University that you have been correctly informed about the purpose of the research and have voluntarily agreed to participate. Because your participation is voluntary, you are free to withdraw comments at any time.

I will be asking you some basic questions pertaining to the mandate of your institution/programs, the involvement of women fish harvesters in determining the focus of particular programs, and the overall attention paid to gender issues within them. You may refuse to answer any specific questions. You should also feel free to offer opinions and information on issues or subjects not covered in the interview that you think are relevant to this research. Every attempt will be made to keep confidential the information that you provide and to protect your anonymity including the name of your organization. The interview will be filed under a number and not your name. Interview notes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.

After the interviews are completed, I will be analysing the results and producing a draft report which I plan to share with women fish harvesters and key informants by mail and feedback phone calls. This will provide another opportunity for you and others to provide input into the report and to identify potential problems with the findings. I will then write a final report. The contents of the final report will be communicated to local women's organizations, fisheries organizations, training institutions involved in fisheries professionalization training, health care professionals and policy makers through presentations and workshops. Summaries of the final report will also be available upon request by calling Brenda Grzetic at 709-437-1817. If you wish to talk to someone independent about this research, please contact Rosonna Tite, Women's Studies Programme Coordinator, Memorial University. Her phone number is 709-737-3322.

I hereby agree to be interviewed for the research on the health-related concerns of women fish harvesters subject to the conditions listed above.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Note: This research is part of a larger research project entitled 'Household and Community Strategies and Women's Health and Well-being in Resource-dependent Areas.'

**APPENDIX C: Overview of Skill Requirements for Apprentice, Level I and Level II
Fish Harvesters**

Apprentice Fish Harvester:

Apprentice fish harvesters and new entrants must be sponsored by a professional fish harvester who is an owner/operator/skipper. Apprentices must not hold full-time employment outside the fishery and must earn 75% of their income from fishing during the fishing season.

Level I Fish Harvester:

Apprentice fish harvesters will be granted Level I status after attaining the following:

- two years of full-time fishing activity; and
- obtaining 55 land-based credits in addition to the five credits for the Basic Safety course required for all new entrants. Recommended courses include fish handling, fishing methods, general maintenance, navigation and safety, and other courses approved by the PFHCB.

Level II Fish Harvester:

Level I fish harvesters will be granted Level II status after attaining the following:

- an additional three years of full-time fishing activity in addition to the Level I criteria;
- an additional 60 land-based credits in addition to the Level I criteria. Recommended courses include fishing techniques, stability, gear or vessel maintenance, managing your fishing enterprise, and other courses approved by the Professional Fish Harvesters Certification Board.

In order to maintain their status, fish harvesters at all levels must:

- fish full-time during the available fishing season in their area;
- earn 75% of their income from fishing during the fishing season; and
- not hold full-time employment outside the fishery (PFHCB, November, 2000).

