

**BEYOND CHEAP WAGE LABOUR: AN INVESTIGATION INTO  
QUALITATIVE LABOUR SHORTAGES AND MOBILITY IN THE NEW  
BRUNSWICK FISHING INDUSTRY**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

High unemployment and outmigration (either temporary or permanent) for work are long-standing features of many rural areas in Canada, particularly Atlantic Canada. In recent years, some workplaces in these areas have come to rely on workers from other parts of the world, often brought in as temporary workers. This dissertation considers the apparent paradox associated with a combination of claims of labour shortages and reliance on outside workers in regions and sectors with high unemployment and ongoing outmigration for work, whether temporary or permanent. The seafood industry (both capture and aquaculture) in a rural region of New Brunswick provides an ideal case study to investigate this paradox. The dissertation asks how and why labour forces in seafood processing in a region of New Brunswick have shifted over time from local to regional and international. It also examines the consequences of these changes for work quality and local communities. Work quality includes wages, work schedules, job security, and other aspects of the working lives of employees (including childcare, eldercare, emotional care, and volunteer work) that encapsulate our lived experience and that overlap with, and are intricately connected to, our work rhythms.

The conceptual framework that guides the dissertation includes insights from feminist political economy (changing corporate structure and government policy, capital accumulation strategies, financialization, and cheap wage labour), and Nandita Sharma's distinction between quantitative and qualitative labour shortages. The framework structures the analysis of shifting labour-capital relations alongside changing labour

forces, workplaces, and community dynamics associated with this sector for the period between 1900 and 2014, with a focus on the latter fifty years. This framework aids in understanding how historic and current competitive conditions in the global political economy involve cheap and often, mobile workers via gendered, and in some cases racialized, divisions of labour and surplus labour pools on regional, national, and international scales.

Data are derived from document analysis and thirty-six semi-structured interviews with seafood processing workers, plant managers, community business owners and key informants associated with seafood processing in one region of New Brunswick carried out in 2012. These interviews explored employee recruitment issues and strategies, employer definitions of good workers, changing work environments, and the industry's shifting corporate structure. Information about the larger policy and corporate context, as well as the changing structures and investment strategies of regional seafood processing companies and their relationships to labour force change and employment quality, came from qualitative document analysis of newspapers, government reports, and news releases.

This dissertation contributes significantly to critical discourses about the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and its impacts, and in particular presents a sustained qualitative assessment of the low-wage stream of the TFWP. It also demonstrates the role of employers and managers in the qualitative construction of vulnerable and cheap labour forces in the context of changing labour forces (local, intra-provincial, interprovincial and international) and how these have intersected within one industry.

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## **List of Abbreviations and Symbols**

ACOA	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
BC	British Columbia
CCL	Canadian Congress of Labour
DFO	Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada)
EI	Employment Insurance
E-RGM	Employment-Related Geographical Mobility
IMP	International Mobility Program
IPO	Initial Public Offering
ISA	Infectious Salmon Anemia
LMO	Labour Market Opinion
LMIA	Labour Market Impact Assessment
NB	New Brunswick
NL	Newfoundland and Labrador
NS	Nova Scotia
PC	Progressive Conservative Party
PEI	Prince Edward Island
SAWP	Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program
SER	Standard Employment Relationship
SNBADC	South New Brunswick Aquaculture Development Committee
TFW	Temporary Foreign Worker
TFWP	Temporary Foreign Worker Program
UI	Unemployment Insurance

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) has been a hot topic in recent years, receiving extensive media coverage between 2012 and 2014. The media coverage, among other things, highlighted specific vulnerabilities and abuses to which workers are susceptible under the TFWP. These vulnerabilities and abuses include low wages, poor living and working conditions, reliance on employers for their ability to stay in Canada, and a lack of social and economic support systems (CBC News 2011; CBC News 2014a; CBC News 2014d; CBC News 2014f). The media have also highlighted the contentious replacement of Canadian workers by workers brought in through the TFWP, especially in resource regions where competition is high for scarce jobs despite the use of Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIA) designed to prevent this from happening. Specific cases involving the Royal Bank of Canada and McDonald's were especially visible in the media (see for example, CBC News 2013, CBC News 2014c). Large-scale use and abuse of the TFWP (of both the program and the workers) appeared to be happening across Canada, in urban centres as well as in rural and remote areas, including areas with high unemployment.

Partially in response to the negative press generated by the media's reports on multiple cases of abuse of the TFWP, the federal Conservative government overhauled the program in June 2014. Changes to the program included tighter restrictions on employers wanting access to the program, especially those located in areas with high

unemployment rates, and a restructuring of the program itself, splitting the program into the TFWP and the International Mobility Program (IMP), and changing categories within the TFWP to low wage/high wage versus low skill/high skill (see Canada 2014).

The 2014 changes to the TFWP affected the seafood processing industry in some provinces in Atlantic Canada. Prior to the 2014 changes, many processors in the Atlantic region had become regular users of the TFWP, seemingly integrating the program into their employment strategy. For example, a press release for the *Atlantic Provinces Economic Council Report Card* for May 2014 indicated a significant jump in the number of workers brought in through the TFWP over a short period, stating that “[t]he number of TFWs employed in Atlantic fish plants grew from five in 2005 to 960 in 2012, with 90 percent of these working in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island” (APEC 2014). While only accounting for 1 percent of total employment, the report card indicates that fifty-six percent of workers using the TFWP in Atlantic Canada in 2012 worked outside of the major urban areas, where unemployment rates at the time were approximately double the rate of those in the urban areas and where they continue to be high (APEC 2014).

The high use of the TFWP, clearly outlined in the 2014 APEC report, resulted in the seafood processing industry in Atlantic Canada rallying vocally against the stricter regulations imposed in 2014, claiming extreme shortages of workers in the industry; for example, Dennis King, the executive director of the P.E.I. Seafood Processors Association, stated, “Finding local workers in communities where populations are declining, outmigration is prevalent and workers are aging is a serious, ongoing

challenge” (Taweel 2014). The continued lobbying efforts of the seafood processing industry over the next two years met with success in the spring of 2016, when an exemption was made for the seafood processing industry in Atlantic Canada due to repeated claims of the imminent demise of the industry because of significant local labour shortages (CBC News 2016).

The continued use of the TFWP, justified by claims of labour shortages in Atlantic Canada’s seafood processing industry, are intriguing, given the industry’s long history of employing local, and, more recently, interprovincial, workers; the location of seafood processing plants in areas with high unemployment rates; and the presence of mechanisms in the TFWP designed to protect Canadian workers from being replaced by international workers, such as the LMIA. In addition, the seafood processing industry is intrinsically connected to the capture fishing industry, which is comprised of harvesting wild-caught seafood. The capture fishing industry in Canada has been heavily restructured through rationalization, and thus job opportunities in that sector have been in decline (DFO 2010). One could assume, as suggested by the high unemployment in the area, the existence of an oversupply of potential employees in the area. However, the aquaculture, or farmed seafood, sector has been growing steadily, arguably providing employment opportunities for fishery workers in rural coastal communities, including within seafood processing (Young and Matthews 2010). Yet studies have shown that the majority of those employed in the aquaculture sector do not, in fact, come from the capture fishery. The use of the TFWP to fill positions that seemingly experienced local and/or Canadian workers are not filling is thus worth investigating. *Why* do purported

labour shortages exist in Atlantic Canada, where seafood processing and aquaculture companies are present in regions with high unemployment? More examination is required to understand the complexity of the labour supply issues in this industry and the apparent paradox of the continued use of the TFWP in areas of high unemployment, in seafood processing and other industries.

Understanding how workers recruited through the TFWP have come to comprise a substantial segment of seafood processing labour forces in rural areas in Atlantic Canada necessitates understanding labour force changes over time in order to better assess whether and how the use of the TFWP aligns with traditional labour force supply solutions or diverges from it, and the ramifications of either. The very limited literature on the seafood processing industry in Canada emphasizes that historically this workforce has been highly gendered, classed (Stainsby 1994), and in some areas racialized (Muszynski 1996). However, this literature is largely historical and does not examine the recent seeming disjuncture between industry claims of labour shortages and the labour surpluses available locally as reported by unemployment statistics. Missing from existing analyses is how and why the TFWP has come to function as the most appropriate, or most favoured, employers' solution for the reported labour shortages in this industry.

The dissertation adds to research on the TFWP by providing a deeper understanding of the Low-Skill Pilot Project stream of the TFWP, which has been under-represented in research to date. It also contributes to the larger literature on labour mobility by focusing on the variations in worker mobility and immobility over time within one industry, showing that in the seafood processing industry, accessing cheap

labour via racialized and classed processes that are tied to (im)mobility of workers is not a new mechanism. This long-standing mechanism is influenced by employer recruitment and hiring practices that are, in turn, fuelled by corporate capital gain strategies within increasingly competitive globalized markets that are powerful agents in shaping labour supply. The dissertation argues that the contemporary labour shortages experienced in the NB seafood processing industry that justify continued use of the TFWP are based in part on what Sharma (2006) identifies as qualitative shortages of a specific type of cheap, politically subjugated, and vulnerable worker, and not just on a quantitative shortage of workers.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

The objective of this dissertation is to explore the relationship between claims about labour shortages in the midst of high formal unemployment, changing labour force composition, and the changing structure of the seafood industry in a rural region of New Brunswick (NB) where both wild-caught and farmed fish are processed. Findings from this study aim to aid in the understanding of the historical trajectory of labour force change in the seafood processing industry in this region of NB from the late 19th century to 2012. My intention is to provide an in-depth historically-informed case study of the changing labour force in seafood processing in both aquaculture and capture plants in NB up to 2012, including local, intra-provincial, and interprovincial workers, in order to understand how the labour shortage and subsequent reliance on the TFWP arose.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The specific questions that I investigate in this dissertation include:

- 1. Who worked in the seafood processing industry in this region from the late 19th century to 2012<sup>1</sup>?**
- 2. How have neoliberalism and corporate capitalism shaped the NB seafood industry in the last century?**
- 3. How has the aquaculture industry affected employment in seafood processing in this region?**
- 4. Who currently works in different parts of the capture, seafood processing, and aquaculture sectors?**
- 5. Why did a narrative of labour shortages exist in this area and industry in 2012 that necessitates the use of the TFWP?**

To answer these questions, I relocated to the case study region in NB for twelve weeks in 2012, conducting thirty-six semi-structured interviews with seafood processing workers, plant managers, community business owners, and key informants associated with seafood processing.<sup>2</sup> Plant workers were not, nor had they ever been unionized in the study area.

These interviews explored employee recruitment issues and strategies, employer definitions of good workers, changing work environments and the industry's shifting corporate structure. Information about the larger policy and corporate context, as well as the changing structures and investment strategies of regional seafood processing

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<sup>1</sup> While the main focus is up to 2012 when I conducted field work, I provide data up until 2014 in specific chapters where data was available.

<sup>2</sup> Four of these interviews took place after the twelve weeks in NB. These interviews occurred in NL with workers who lived in NL and had been or were currently employed seasonally in NB seafood plants.

companies and their relationships to labour force change and employment quality, came from qualitative document analysis of newspapers, government reports, and news releases.

## **1.4 Background**

Labour supply issues are of significant economic and social concern, and the TFWP, despite its contentiousness, originated in a policy framework designed to address shortages in the Canadian labour force without producing upward pressure on domestic unemployment rates (Gross 2014). Use of migrant labour and the TFWP are justified by employers via reported labour shortages in many industries in Canada, not just seafood processing, and not just in Atlantic Canada. The questions outlined above provide an entry to understanding, within a specific case study, how broad narratives of labour shortages are shaped by global economic trends and federal migration policies that are then often situated within rural communities. This next section provides a brief overview of the TFWP, and is followed by a description of the case study in NB, and the seafood processing sectors that it encapsulates.

### ***1.4.1 Temporary Foreign Worker Program***

The Temporary Foreign Worker Program in Canada is divided into multiple streams: the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, the Live-in Caregivers Program, and the Pilot Project for Occupations Requiring Lower Levels of Foreign Training (Low-Skill Pilot Program). It is for this Low-Skill Pilot program that seafood processing workers are designated and which is the focus of this dissertation. The Low-Skill Pilot Program legislation can be traced back to the early 1970s, when on the heels of Canada's new

multiculturalism policy, the federal government introduced the Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program (NIEAP) in 1973 (Marsden 2011). While this program focused mainly on higher-skilled workers, it set the stage for the Low-Skill Pilot Program.

Introduced in 2002, the Low-Skill Pilot Program tied workers to one employer for the length of their contract (which could not exceed four years), divided work into low-skill and high-skill categories (by creating a special program for low-skilled work), and, similar to other temporary migrant worker programs, did not afford these workers the same rights as other Canadian immigrants. The program restricts TFWP entrants' access to social and economic benefits, permanent immigration, and political representation (Marsden 2011, 45).

From 2002 to 2005, the TFWP saw small but continual increases in numbers of workers coming into Canada (see Table 1.1) (Canada 2014). In 2006, the program was expanded under the Conservative government, and the numbers of the low skill pilot project went from 3,769 workers in 2005 to a high of 25,664 workers in 2008 (although this has been argued to be as high as almost 70,000, see Cragg 2011, and Table 1.1) (Canada 2014).

The governmental and corporate rhetoric about the TFWP maintains that these workers are to be treated equally, and are to receive pay, benefits, and insurance coverage equal to Canadians. Yet follow-up inspection or enforcement to ensure that companies adhere to equal work environments was only recently implemented (see Canada 2014). Despite the rhetoric and recent changes to assist in reducing the exploitation of

**Table 1.1 Migrant Workers in Canada 2003-2012**

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Workers International Arrangements*</b>	15751	17178	14080	15935	17202	19367	18496	21252	24901	29118
<b>Workers Canadian Interest**</b>	37001	41616	50207	56081	80892	72992	76433	85637	94476	102119
<b>Low skill pilot program***</b>	2327	2785	3,769	6,529	15310	25664	19014	14143	15167	20636
<b>Seasonal agricultural worker Program</b>	18698	19052	20281	21253	22581	24189	23393	23914	24500	25414
<b>Live-In Caregiver Program</b>	5028	6651	7133	9079	12955	11867	8756	7545	5884	6242
<b>Information Technology Workers</b>	1052	1298	1762	2131	2977	3194	2688	2871	606	210
<b>Other workers with LMO****</b>	22089	22583	24242	26495	30306	32312	26611	22666	24065	28111
<b>Without LMO</b>	986	1065	891	947	1304	1154	1354	1047	969	1723
<b>Total Migrant Workers</b>	102932	112,228	122,365	138,450	163,527	190,739	176,745	179,075	190,568	213,573

(Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada 2016)

\* Includes North American Free Trade Agreement, other Free Trade Agreements, provincial agreements, and General Agreements on Trade in Services.

\*\* Includes reciprocal employment, employment benefits, spouse/common law partner, research and studies related, and other Canadian interest.

\*\*\* Includes migrant workers from Guatemala working in agriculture

\*\*\*\* Labour Market Assessment

these workers, the very nature of the program is exploitative. The program positions Canadian and migrant workers in the same industry side by side, but with uneven citizenship rights that affect relationships to employer and community. Differences may also exist among workers due to economic hardships that workers entering Canada through the TFWP may experience (such as large debts to recruiters in their home

countries, as well as their responsibility for economic support of their families back home), which exacerbate inequalities between workers coming through this program and workers who have Canadian citizenship or open work permits (Gardiner Barber 2013; Mertins-Kirkwood 2014).

The TFWP's inherent mechanisms of inequality are not new. The program is drawing on and re-entrenching long-standing histories in Canada of racism, imperialism, and patriarchy that have sorted migrants into different economic, social, and legal categories (Sharma 2006, 75). The TFWP's gendered and often racialized, unskilled and expendable workforce is tied to immigration policies throughout Canadian history that have been inherently discriminatory and racist and have set the stage for the TFWP. These include the 1885 Chinese Immigration Act, the 1908 Act to Amend the Immigration Act, the 1910 Immigration Act, the 1923 Order in Council, and the 1952 Immigration Act. While shifts in the late 1960s masked overtly racist language in policies, the policies that followed (including the 1966 White Paper on Immigration, the 1971 Multiculturalism Policy, and the 1976 Immigration Act) maintained the same sentiments, and were just as effective in maintaining the same socially stratified outcomes. Immigration policy research in Canada establishes the significance of these policies in re-creating segmented citizenship rights, opportunities, and experiences (Sharma 2006). These segmented citizenship rights are further fractured along intersections of race, gender, and class (as well as other structured inequalities such as age and disability). While it is clear the use of migrant workers in seafood processing is increasing (see Table 1.2 and 1.3), it is not clear why and how this is happening or

**Table 1.2 Temporary Migrant Workers in New Brunswick 2008-2012**

Total Number of Migrant Workers brought in through the TFWP in New Brunswick 2008-2012	
Year	# of TFW
2008	1775
2009	1520
2010	1780
2011	2495
2012	2345

(HRDC 2014)

**Table 1.3 Temporary Migrant Workers in Seafood Processing in New Brunswick 2008-2012**

Total Number of TFWs in Seafood Processing in New Brunswick 2008-2012		
Year	# of Migrant Workers	% of NB
2008	165	9
2009	200	13
2010	637	36
2011	1075	43
2012	1120	48

(HRDC 2014)

whether the majority of workers are in capture or aquaculture processing plants. Also unclear are the effects of the increasing use of international migrant workers upon all workers in seafood processing in both capture and aquaculture plants in rural NB and other rural communities. The historical context of this study showcases both the intricacies of the industry's labour supply challenges and how the trajectory of the labour force has changed over time in this region and industry from immigrant, to local, to intra-provincial, to interprovincial, and, ultimately, to international with the use of the TFWP. Providing the historical context of mobility and immobility of workers outlined in this dissertation exemplifies how the use of the TFWP by the seafood processing industry in NB is a new labour strategy within an old system of racialized and gendered practices that serves to recreate a cheap(er), more docile, and precarious workforce. Instead of focusing on only one type of mobile worker, this case study investigates multiple types of employment-related mobility within the same industry, over time.

### **1.5 New Brunswick Seafood Processing Case Study**

Many seafood processing companies in NB, for both wild-caught and farmed seafood, employ temporary migrants accessed through the TFWP. Concurrently, the seafood processing companies in NB have undergone significant changes in ownership, mechanization, shift schedules, and community involvement. This region and sector make for an appropriate case study to investigate the use of the TFWP in areas of high unemployment and the possible connections with the larger globalized economy, neoliberal policies, and corporate restructuring, as well as labour force changes over time. While the focus of this dissertation is the seafood processing industry (both capture and

farmed) and its labour force in NB, in specific instances I draw on existing comparative research and data from BC's seafood processing industry I collected in 2010 to lend insight into how seafood processing companies in Canada have used divisive labour tactics, such as maintaining racialized and gendered workers as a cheap labour pool. Existing research on race and gender in the BC seafood industry provides useful analysis for understanding how labour is organized around race and gender.

### **1.6 The Larger Context of the New Brunswick Seafood Processing Industry**

Understanding the historical changes in the seafood processing labour force necessitates a broader understanding of employment in NB (specifically within the fishing and aquaculture industries), the seafood processing industry, and the TFWP in Canada. New Brunswick is considered to be one of Canada's "have-not" provinces. With a mostly rural population (the second-largest in Canada next to PEI) of 750,000 in 2011, and a GDP of \$29.5 billion in 2010 (McFarland 2012, 6), NB also had one of the highest unemployment rates of Canadian provinces in 2011, at 9.5 percent (New Brunswick 2013a). The NB unemployment rate is historically variable, and saw a continual increase between 2006 and 2011 from 8.7 percent to 9.5 percent (Statistics Canada, NL Statistics). NB's high unemployment rate is related to the province's reliance on resource industries, such as forestry and fishing. These resource industries are seasonal in nature, and, while integral to the growth of the province since its origins, have experienced economic downturns throughout much of the late 20th century and into the 21st century (Chang et al. 2014).

### ***1.6.1 The Capture Fishery***

Although the fisheries in NB in the 21st century are not as important to rural regions as they once were in terms of employment, they are still important both economically and culturally to coastal communities. Fisheries off both coasts in NB continue to be mainly seasonal (Gardner Pinfold 2010). Similar to other fishing industries in Canada, increased technological capacity and efficiency in the fishing industry have resulted in a significant decrease in many fish stocks, especially in groundfish populations, from which only lobster stocks are rebounding (Savoie and Beaudin 1998; Wiber et al. 2012). Reduced stocks have led to reduced fish quotas for many key species, but, despite reduced quotas of most species, the capture fishery in NB is still a significant employer in NB. In 2010, approximately 7,000 people were employed in the capture fishery, many of whom were fifth- or sixth-generation fish harvesters (New Brunswick 2007, Wiber et al. 2012). A 2008 report estimated about "one in fourteen New Brunswick jobs is directly or indirectly dependent on the oceans" (Gardner Pinfold 2010, iii). Jobs in the capture fishery include fish harvesters, shore workers such as dock workers who unload and sort fish off the boats, and dockside monitors, and seafood processing workers who sort, pack, clean, fillet, and, in some cases, season or batter seafood, as well as those who maintain equipment, conduct quality control, and work in management positions. With the decline in wild fish stocks generally, many jobs associated with the capture fishery are less stable, while at the same time the production of farmed or cultured seafood is growing; employment in this sector, however, has not supported those retiring out of the capture fishery, and is also often unstable (Young and Matthews 2010).

### ***1.6.2 Aquaculture***

The federal and provincial governments have been promoting the aquaculture industry in rural coastal communities for over a decade, as a replacement for job losses in the capture industry. For example, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) states in the Communities and Employment section of its website:

Aquaculture presents employment opportunities and economic growth in remote, rural and coastal communities across Canada including in First Nations and other Aboriginal communities. The industry has been important for local economies along the west, and east coasts where employment in the wild fishery, forestry and mining sectors have declined. In turn, the industry has benefitted from a stable and experienced workforce. (DFO 2010)

In the NB seafood industry, especially within aquaculture, current use of the TFWP is perplexing in light of its reported significance in providing employment opportunities in these rural coastal communities.

Both the DFO and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) define aquaculture as

the farming of aquatic organisms including fish, molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic plants. Farming implies some sort of intervention in the rearing process to enhance production, such as regular stocking, feeding, protection from predators, etc. Farming also implies individual or corporate ownership of the stock being cultivated. (DFO 2004, 4)

In NB, the government website provides an almost identical definition, defining aquaculture as

[the] rearing of aquatic organisms, including fish, molluscs, crustaceans and aquatic plants. The term “rearing” implies individual or corporate ownership of the organisms being reared and also implies some form of intervention in the rearing process to enhance production, such as regular stocking, feeding, and protection from predators and disease. (New Brunswick 2009)

Aquaculture is quickly becoming the dominant source of seafood the world over.

Globally, aquaculture is predicted to provide over sixty-two percent of the global seafood supply by 2030, in part because the global supply of marine capture seafood is expected to stay constant or decline (CCFAM 2010). It is also the fastest-growing industry within agriculture (growing by 8.1 percent annually between 1970 and 2010), surpassing even meat production (Belton and Bush 2013).

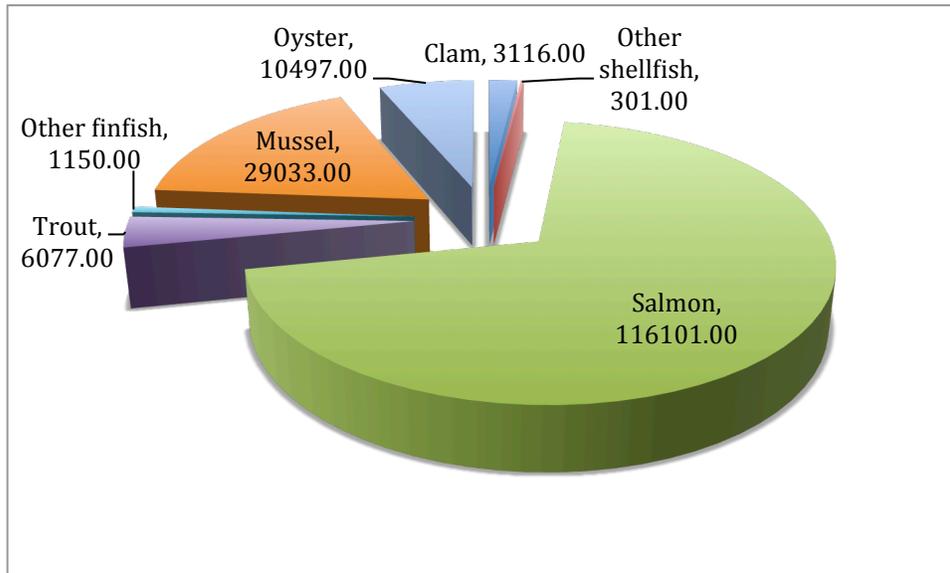
There are three main types of seafood produced through aquaculture methods – shellfish, finfish, and aquatic plants. Production is organized in two ways: extensively and intensively. Extensive aquaculture is defined by its limited technological requirements, effort, and small yield, which cater to subsistence and domestic markets. It is also considered environmentally sustainable, with fewer environmental impacts (Urban 2003). Intensive aquaculture is the most common type of aquaculture in Western Europe and North America and is characterized by large production outputs that maximize profit to export markets, high input (technology, feed, drugs, equipment and energy), and significant research and scientific knowledge (Urban 2003).

Intensive aquaculture in Canada is divided into shellfish, finfish, and marine plant categories, but it is the finfish and shellfish categories that are most common and most developed. In order of amount produced, salmon, trout, mussels, oysters, and clams are the most-farmed species in Canada (DFO 2010) (see figure 1.1). In 2012, Canada produced 116,101 tonnes of farmed salmon. Direct, indirect, and induced employment in aquaculture in Canada totalled 14,079 full-time jobs in 2010<sup>3</sup> (DFO 2013). The Canadian Atlantic salmon aquaculture industry started in NB in 1979 (ACFFA 2011), and by 2012

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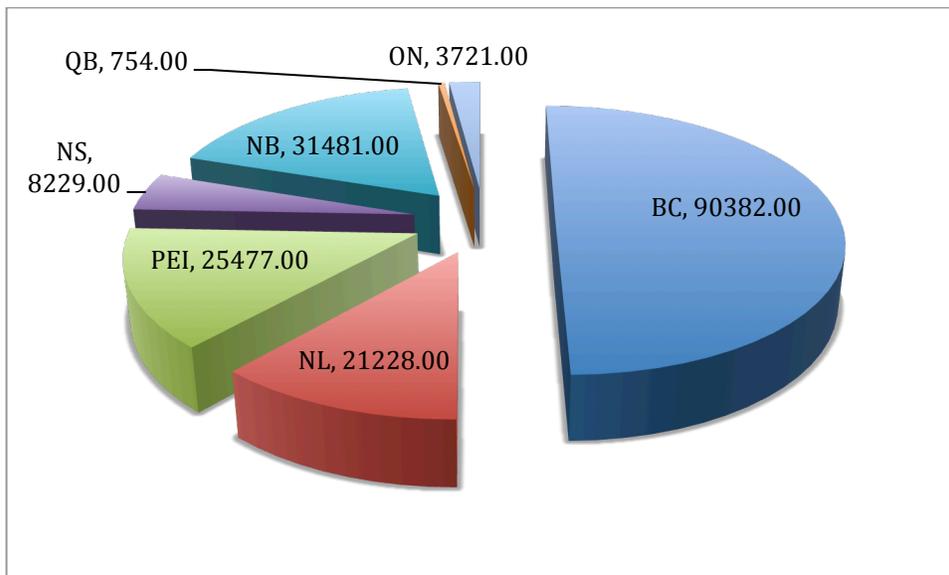
<sup>3</sup> I was unable to acquire data for 2012.

**Figure 1.0.1 Production by Species, 2012, 183,106t**



(DFO 2016)

**Figure 1.0.2 Output by Province, 2012**



(DFO 2016)

total production was 31,481 tonnes. Aquaculture began in BC shortly after aquaculture started in NB, and BC is now Canada's largest aquaculture producer (see figures 1.1 and 1.2). In 2012, NB was the second-largest producer of farmed salmon in Canada (see

figure 1.2), which is still the case.

The aquaculture industry in NB was originally made up of multiple small-scale operations, but is now dominated by a few multinational corporations due to a combination of intense international competition, changes to investment structures, and provincial policies (Wiber et al. 2012; Marshall 2001; Walters 2007).

Regarding the specific geographical locations under study in this dissertation, DFO asserts:

Aquaculture has transformed [Name of County] from a high unemployment low-income area to one of relative prosperity within the province. Though income and employment levels remain below provincial averages, the County has made substantial gains over the past 20 years from an economy characterized by seasonal employment and limited opportunity. Aquaculture and its supply and service industries offer year-round employment and good incomes in an export industry that has become the foundation of the local economy. (DFO 2010)

DFO clearly sees aquaculture as an economic driver and boon to these communities. Yet, at the same time, the aquaculture industry in this area is employing and continuing to apply for workers through the TFWP. Thus, intensive salmon aquaculture clearly can contribute to overall employment, but there is limited knowledge about what influences how much employment is gained, for whom, where this employment is located, what it is derived from, its quality (incomes, health effects, stability), and its contribution to economic diversification in the short and longer terms. This dissertation attempts to fill this gap.

### ***1.6.3 Employment in Seafood Processing***

Seafood processing first emerged from the capture fishing industry, and then carried through with the introduction of the aquaculture industry. Currently it is an

important part of both industries and the many coastal communities in rural Canada that have relied on seafood processing plants for employment. The loss of jobs through company mergers, consolidations, and rationalization has impacted not only these processing workers, but their communities as well (Neis and Grzetic 2005).

In both aquaculture and capture plants, the size of the plants affects the work organization because larger plants and farmed seafood plants have more machines performing the basic cleaning, cutting, and filleting of the seafood. Different types of seafood require different types of processing and thus require workers to work different machines, and handle different species of seafood in different ways. In fact, plants that process multiple species (which is common for all plants except for farmed processing plants) change their "lines" depending on the species being processed.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the type of seafood being processed affects the organization and job description of seafood plant workers.

Different species and differences in plant organization result in different job descriptions (as well as different health and safety risks) for these workers. For instance, work in seafood plants that process for the capture industry are, and always have been, dependent on and thus structured around the availability and viability of fish (or shellfish) stocks. Seafood catches (versus farmed) are seasonal, highly unpredictable in amount, location and timing, and highly perishable. Therefore, seafood processing has historically been not only seasonal, but sporadic, unpredictable, repetitive, and fast-paced. Workers in

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4. Lines refers to the way the production line is organized within the plant, and this determines where workers are situated within the plant, as well as how they will be processing the seafood.

the capture industry get called in when the seafood boats arrive and work until the seafood is processed, which can at times span days on end. Due to the high variability of working hours, combined with the seasonal aspect, it has been common for seafood processing workers to supplement their incomes in the off season with Employment Insurance (EI).

Seafood processing work in NB, as well as across Canada and globally, can vary quite significantly. Job descriptions and employment hours are often specific to the geographies, the size of the plants, and the seafood species being processed, including whether they are wild or farmed. Generally, seafood processing in Canada has been centralized over time in larger centres, where large corporate-owned plants do a majority of the processing of their own brands of seafood as well as custom-label processing for larger chain stores.

Data for seafood processing workers is inconsistent. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2016) provide employment in seafood processing from 2004-2012, with 33,034 workers employed in 2012 in seafood processing Canada wide (See Table 1.4). Yet, when looking at data from 2011 from the National Household Survey compares to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada there are inconsistencies. According to National Household Survey data from 2011, seafood processing employed 26,045 workers in Canada in 2011 (while Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada states that 31,611 people were employed in 2011). The National Household survey data, however, provides information on NB and BC. NB's seafood processing sector in 2011 employed 4,825 workers; in BC, the industry employed 3,170.

Historically, more women than men worked in these plants in both provinces; according to 2011 data, however, this is no longer the case in Canada overall or in BC, but is still the case to some extent in NB (see table 1.5).<sup>5</sup> In both BC and NB, there is a history of hiring migrant indigenous and immigrant workers to work in the fish plants. While the historical workforces share similar gender and

**Table 1.4 Employment in Seafood Processing in Canada 2004-2012**

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Total Employment</b>	33875	30695	29436	30225	27647	27305	29599	31611	33034
<b>Production Employment</b>	30697	27538	26316	27191	24508	24312	26426	28379	29562
<b>Administration Employment</b>	3196	3157	3120	3034	3139	2993	3173	3232	3472

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2016)

**Table 1.5 Employment in Seafood Processing in Canada, NB, and BC, 2012**

<b>Number of Workers Employed in Seafood Processing in Canada, NB, and BC in 2012</b>			
	Total	Males	Females
Canada	29,745	14,140	11,905
NB	4,825	2,290	2,540
BC	3,170	1,815	1,355

(2011 NHS 3117 Seafood Product Preparation and Packaging Statistics Canada)

5. Data for this table was provided by Statistics Canada's 2011 NHS. The data provided is a snapshot of the industry, but inconsistencies appear, especially when looking at provincial numbers. Thus the accuracy of these numbers is not guaranteed. The lack of the long-form Census (which historically collected this data) is apparent from the incongruences in the 2011 NHS data on this workforce.

class dynamics, race-based hiring practices are unique to the community contexts. For example, BC historically used employment strategies geared towards hiring the most vulnerable workers from marginalized classed, gendered, and racialized groups, thus ensuring the lowest wages (Muszynski 1996).

With the boom in the Canadian fishing industry in the early 20th century came better wages and protections for workers, for the most part, backed by powerful unions. With the decline in the capture industry and the subsequent weakening and loss of many unions, in addition to new workplace organization and scheduling introduced with the advent of aquaculture, work in seafood processing seems to be increasingly precarious. The number of seafood processing workers in BC peaked at close to 4,000 in 2000 and has seen a downward trend since (British Columbia 2002, 2007).

Stainsby (1994) and Muszynski (1996) argue that female workers are relegated to a reserve army of labour, and that they are the first to be fired in economically stringent times. Female workers, regardless of other social positions such as age and race/ethnicity, are typically assigned sex-segregated job tasks that are perceived as the least skilled (Stainsby 1994, Muszynski 1996). These workers are found to experience the highest levels of insecurity due to low levels of demand for their work (Silla et al. 2003, in Tompa et al. 2007). Therefore, female fish processing workers, who are labeled unskilled and expendable, are in an even more insecure position than their male co-workers.

In recent years, an arguably even more insecure and precarious type of worker has

been recruited to work in seafood processing plants in Atlantic Canada: migrant workers entering Canada through the TFWP. Of the 960 TFWP fish plant workers accounted for by the *Atlantic Provinces Economic Council Report Card* in May 2014, only 255 were working in PEI fish plants, while 755 were working in NB fish plants. The perceived employment shortage was used to justify the high numbers of migrant workers brought in through the TFWP, especially in seafood processing, with the report stating, “The recent influx of TFWs has provided a much needed boost to the workforce of several firms in Atlantic Canada, particularly those in seafood processing” (CBC News 2014d). The use of the TFWP to fill the reported labour shortage in seafood processing follows historical trends in Canada’s immigration policies, and the program itself is not without critics and concerns.

## 1.7 Overview of Existing Literature

Much of the literature on seafood processing and aquaculture in Canada either neglects, or was published too long ago, to situate these industries within a more recent sociopolitical landscape, and thus current case studies are missing from the literature. I did, however, build on the works of both Alicja Muszynski (1996)<sup>6</sup> and Joan Marshall (2001, 2009), as their studies on seafood processing in rural coastal communities in Canada provide historical and contextual analyses that are key to my arguments.

As well, the existing Canadian literature on fisheries is particularly silent regarding the “era of mobilities” (Halfacree 2012), thus the majority of this literature (see Muszynski 1996 for an exception) disregards how the vast changes to sociopolitical

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6. Muszynski’s (2006) *Cheap Wage Labour* was the inspiration for the title of this thesis.

systems associated with the seafood industry has resulted in increased mobility as it relates to work. Drawing on the work-related mobilities literature that focuses on raced, classed, and gendered aspects of migrant labour and citizenship (specifically the prolific works of Kerry Preibisch [2007-2014] and Nandita Sharma [2006]), I add to this literature a spectrum approach to mobility, within one sector, similar to Preibisch's historically based work on migrants coming to Canada through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, but I also build on Sharma's argument that qualitative, not just quantitative, labour shortages are manufactured, by providing a detailed case study of how this can occur. My findings help to provide context for the media, government, and corporate discourse on labour shortages and lazy, EI-abusing seafood processing workers (Curry 2012).

### ***1.7.1 Seafood Processing***

The existing literature on seafood processing work in Canada since the 1980s has highlighted changes to work quality, including decreasing employment hours, reorganized job descriptions, shorter seasons, the dwindling power of unions, plant closures and mergers, and tighter restrictions on access to EI and income assistance (Messing and Reveret 1983; Lamson 1986; Ilcan 1986; Guppy 1987; Muszynski 1987; Stainsby 1994; Harrison and Power 2005; Neis and Grzetic 2005; Howse et al. 2006). Some studies focus on occupational health and safety to show that the organization of these workplaces, as well as the products they process, have a serious impact on the health of these workers (Howse et al. 2006; Messing and Reveret 1983; Power 2000). These studies contribute to a larger literature on work quality, which in many definitions

includes attention to workers' health. Overall, this literature discusses how a restructuring of both seafood processing work and the social policies relevant to that work, such as those related to Employment Insurance, have further eroded working conditions and job quality in jobs that were already defined by their low pay, high speed, and high-pressure work environments. This dissertation both adds to and builds on this research by providing current research on the NB seafood processing industry and its fluctuating mobile workforce.

### ***1.7.2 Aquaculture***

While aquaculture in Canada is heavily studied, the focus is mainly on its relationship to the health and improvement of seafood stocks (e.g., Van Zyll de Jong et al. 2004; Rosenberg 2008) and on the environmental impacts of aquaculture (e.g. Anderson 2007; Neori et al. 2007; Wiber et al. 2012). To a smaller extent, some studies examine the economic aspects of comparisons with other countries (Asche and Bjørndal 2011) as well as policies defining how aquaculture is governed (Liu et al. 2013). There is a limited, but growing, number of studies on Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and aquaculture (Cole et al. 2009; Myers 2010; Myers and Cole 2009; Moreau and Neis 2009), but none of these looks more broadly at changes to work quality or to the labour force, especially regarding the use of the TFWP. There are also no studies I am aware of that investigate the relationship between the capture fishery and aquaculture in the way this dissertation does.

### ***1.7.3 Gendered, Raced, and Classed Mobility and Citizenship***

Muszynski (1996) argues that not just class but also gender and race were used to create

and maintain different categories of cheap shoreworkers in BC. Her groundbreaking work takes a historical perspective and highlights key aspects of how a labour force was constructed by canneries – how these companies used race, gender, class, and mobility to recruit and maintain a cheap, just-in-time workforce. She also highlights the significance of capitalism in shaping the way canneries have been constructed foregrounding how labour forces were manufactured by capital in the past. She highlights the complexities of “local,” “mobile,” and “company town” by showing how local companies used immigrant racialized workers, initially often immobilized by their debt to labour contractors.

There is a small body of literature on labour force evolution from local to international migrant workers in agriculture in Canada that presents useful insights for this dissertation (Preibisch 2007; Preibisch 2011; Hennebry and Preibisch 2010; Preibisch 2010; Preibisch and Binford 2007). These insights include the role migrant workers play in the current globalized economy, and specifically the global agrifood system, in increasing competition and labour flexibility (Preibisch 2007; Sharma 2006), and the increasing precariousness of occupations that employ migrant workers (Fudge 2011). Within this literature, authors draw on citizenship theories (MacDonald 2006; Benach et al. 2010; Brysk and Shafir 2004; Fudge 2011; Gravel et al. 2009; Hennebry 2010; Marsden 2011; Preibisch 2007) in combination with mobility theories (Cresswell 2010; Hannam et al. 2006; Sheller and Urry 2006; Buscher and Urry 2009) as a means to understand the current realities, risks, and exploitations, as well as protections, that these workers experience.

There are currently no studies using a mobility frame that contribute to understanding the relationship between changing labour force composition due to work-related mobility and increasingly insecure or precarious work for local workers in fish processing and aquaculture.

### **1.8 Outline of Dissertation**

This case study on historical labour force change and labour shortage in seafood processing, much like any research on fisheries, reaches across multiple disciplines and concepts. Chapter 2 lays out a conceptual framework and related key definitions that are used to make sense of changes to the corporate structure and the labour force in the aquaculture and capture seafood processing sectors in NB. Theoretical underpinnings for the data analysis stem from a feminist political economic framework and theories on mobility and citizenship. Specifically delineated are relationships among capitalist global economic systems, financialization, and temporary migrant worker programs that continue to rewrite work rhythms, increasing the precarity of the work. Chapter 3 describes the methods used to conduct my case study in NB, as well as to undertake qualitative document analysis of newspaper articles, news releases, and government reports.

The subsequent chapters focus on assessing labour changes in seafood processing and capture fisheries and aquaculture, analyzing the propensity of this industry to use cheap labour, and understanding the current manifestation of this in NB through the application of the TFWP. Chapter 4 provides a detailed examination of the history of the local workforce in one region of NB, and how this workforce expanded to include first

intra-provincial workers, and then interprovincial migrants coming from NL during the period from the 1800s to 1980. The chapter helps us understand the history of the seafood processing industry in NB, including how ownership and labour forces have changed over time. Furthermore, this chapter elucidates the manufacturing of place, the significance of employee ties to the industry and the company, as well as the solidifying of a past work rhythm, tightly winding together the interrelationships of place, work, and identity. Also explored in this chapter are the historical colonial, racial, and gendered labour processes associated with the expansion and industrialization of this industry in the period from 1800 to 1980, and in recent years, its connections to growing corporate international fluidity. The following two chapters deliberate upon the shift in corporate capitalism within the seafood processing plants in the region from 1980 to 2014. Chapter 5 examines corporate capitalism's impact upon the capture seafood processing companies, examining how financialization processes, such as Individual Transferable Quota's (ITQs) and private equity, have reshaped the company-worker relationship. Chapter 6 focuses on the rise of corporate capitalism within the aquaculture industry in NB. Both chapters discuss globalization and corporate capitalism, associated significant mergers and acquisitions in all three companies, and the interconnections between global finance and cheap labour, in particular as it applies to these sectors.

The final chapters focus on labour force change. Chapter 7 details the decline in local labourers, including youth, and the introduction of the interprovincial workforce, mostly coming from NL. It details the impetus behind why workers from NL were mobile, as well as the changes to their work environments and work rhythms in both the

aquaculture and capture industries in NB that may have deterred this workforce from making the commute in recent years. As part of this analysis, changes to Unemployment Insurance (UI)/EI and the restructuring and rationalization of the fishery as factors further exacerbating labour shortages are also considered. Chapter 8 provides an overview of the TFWP and its inner workings in NB, exploring the changes to the program over time, and investigates the processes associated with the development of reliance on this type of workforce in areas of high unemployment and low population through data from interviews in the study region. Provincial sponsorship of permanent residents is discussed and the role of such sponsorships in increasing the provincial population through the TFWP. Both chapters 7 and 8 delve into issues of power and how social constructions of gender, class, and race infuse workers' everyday lives at home, at work, and in the community. These intersections complicate power relations and are working to redefine work and communities in NB, altering many of the rhythms of work through which local people have lived for generations.

## 2 Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framing for this dissertation and argues that the defining characteristics of labour shortages within many industries in Canada are more clearly understood through a feminist political economic framework. Through this lens, the recent manifestations of mobilities of capital and labour are understood in connection to the deep ideological shifts that occurred within political economic systems in Canada (as well as much of North America and Western Europe) from the late 19th century to 2012. Canada's political and economic (and in many ways ecological) shift, first to, and then from, a Keynesian welfare state, and then to a neoliberal one (Harvey 2010), alongside globalization processes, has transformed many industries – including seafood industries – and labour (im)mobilities. In addition, the economic ideological shift has transformed policies, such as Employment Insurance (EI) and the TFWP, which are connected to and embedded within communities via workers. The chapter first begins with an overview of feminist political economy. Second, capital, corporate capitalism, neoliberalism, and financialization are discussed as significant in shaping government policies, as well as economic and labour force decisions within corporations. Third, patterns of employment related to labour mobility, and its interconnections among neoliberal immigration policies and unequal citizenship rights, are outlined. This section argues that mobility is a significant factor in how labour forces are managed and controlled. Fourth, precarious labour is discussed, along with how changing and eroding

aspects of work quality (decreasing or stagnating wages and increasingly flexible or precarious work schedules and work environments) are enhancing power inequalities between employers and employees. A discussion of how the use of the TFWP may be further exacerbating this trend, and contributing to the manufacturing of labour shortages, ends this section. Fifth, a brief discussion on labour agency is provided. The final section of this chapter presents a deeper understanding of how current corporate capitalist processes, encouraged by neoliberal-informed economic and immigration policies and practices, are not just about how cheap and mobile labour is increasingly filling labour shortages, but also get at the latent question of why and how qualitative labour shortages can and are manufactured in some areas, through understanding the much broader issue of a long-standing capitalist desire to reset resource and workers' rhythms in alignment with continual profit accumulation.

## **2.2 Feminist Political Economy**

Feminist political economy, as outlined by Rai and Waylen (2013), focuses on four key areas: 1) understanding economies as gendered structures and economic crisis as crisis in social reproduction, as well as in finance and production; 2) assessing economic policies through the lens of women's rights; 3) analyzing global transformations in women's work; 4) making visible the unpaid economy within which care is provided for families and communities, and critiquing the way policymakers are addressing (or failing to address) this unpaid economy (Rai and Waylen 2013, 6).

People hold multiple and in some cases contradictory identities that are gendered, raced, classed, aged, disabled, etc. in varying compilations that act as barriers in some

instances to social mobility and entrance tickets in others. Individuals move through these social categorical spaces in multiple, temporal, and non-linear ways throughout their lifetimes. Social standing (and the associated power and privilege) within society thus depends much on how one's own identity pulls together the multitude of categories, and how this compilation or intersection is read by the society that the individual inhabits, in specific geographic locations and in specific eras. Thus this dissertation explores exploitative labour practices based on structured inequalities among gendered, raced, and classed workers.

The dissertation aims to recognize the gender-based, but also colonial and racialized political and economic processes that have maintained and continue to maintain power inequalities globally. This includes an understanding of how capitalist notions of labour are inherently gendered and favour a concept of labourer and labour that ignores and at the same time benefits from unpaid social reproductive labour. It also includes an understanding of colonial ideologies and cultural norms and practices which have carried through to Canada's current labour practices, including racial categories of privilege and oppression that are built on the shallow racial and ethnic stereotypes afforded to immigrants to Canada, but also on our stereotypes of whiteness and "Canadianness."

### ***2.2.1 Capitalism***

Capital, as defined by Harvey (2010), "is not a thing but a process in which money is perpetually sent in search of more money" (40). The process of accumulation then

requires constant growth, or stimulus, to maintain its momentum, or continual “flow in circulation” (Harvey 2010, 41). Capitalism is in an “advanced state” that Sassen (2014) describes as "a form of primitive accumulation executed through complex operations and much specialized innovation, ranging from the logistics of outsourcing to the algorithms of finance" (12). Industrial capitalism has organized the political and economic systems in Western Europe and North America since the 18th century (Harvey 2010).

Corporations have existed within capitalism since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Carroll 2004). Carroll (2004) links corporate power with corporate capitalism and explains that “corporate power is the power that accrues to enormous concentrations of capital – in the modern world, large corporations” (2).

The political ideologies around how capital should be regulated, and to what extent, have been fluid over time, moving from early industrial staple capitalism to Keynesian welfare state to neoliberalism (Harvey 2010). Capitalism has remained the dominant economic system, despite changes to how it has been governed. Different nations/states that operate under capitalist systems regulate capital flows to varying degrees through governance systems like policies, investment, infrastructure, aid, and taxation. Governance is central to regulating the ease of capital flow, and any shift in governance in relation to capital, such as the most recent shift from a Keynesian welfare model to a neoliberal one, will have economic, ecological, and employment consequences.

### ***2.2.2 Neoliberalism***

Neoliberalism is “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that

human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey 2007, 2). Neoliberalism in its essence is situated within the narrative of individuality and freedom via notions of privatization and competition.

Neoliberal policies, or the clawing back of a Keynesian welfare state model that was characteristic of Canada, if not North America and much of Western Europe, beginning in the 1970s, crystalized in the 1980s and 1990s. Strongly influenced by right-wing or conservative ideologies, neoliberalism has also been referred to as neoconservatism, which, due to the fact that classical conservative principles incorporate social responsibilities (such as welfare and economic regulation), is in actuality an inaccurate term, because neoliberalism seems to reject any notion of social obligation (DeRoche 2001, 313).

The lack of social obligation is reflected in the Keynesian policies that were restructured in Canada under neoliberal influence – most notably, Employment Insurance (EI). Many other social programs were either removed or restructured through neoliberal-infused policy changes, these changes included increasing privatization of health care and public services, removal of tariffs and taxes, and the easing of exportation and trade. In Canada, provincial and federal governments’ implementation of neoliberally influenced governance models, it has been argued, shifted government’s role from that of a governing body that controls commodification to one that takes on an active role in increasing marketization and commodification (McBride and McNutt 2007, 183).

Crow and Albo (2005) describe how neoliberal policies shape labour in response to economic instability and increased competition, resulting in the restructuring of industries through such processes as plant shutdowns, shifting production sites to areas with no or little union organization, increasing lean production, flexible manufacturing, and non-standard work arrangements. They describe this as an “employers’ offensive” (Crow and Albo 2005, 13), which, in conjunction with other strategies (such as inter-worker competition and wage compression), ultimately results in more wealth accruing to corporations rather than workers.

Changing capitalist processes, including increasing corporate capitalism and financialization within a neoliberal governance model, are reshaping political and labour dynamics, or establishing a new rhythm of work that is not only increasingly at odds with workers’ abilities to manage life outside of work (with increasing work mobility and precarious labour), but also affects access to and conservation of the environment and its natural resources through increased privatization.

Carothers and Chambers (2012) define privatization in fisheries as:

a variety of processes that redefine access rights or privileges to open, common or, state-owned fisheries . . . we use the term here to describe many processes that increase the level of private allocation of, and control over, public resources. Privatization of fishing rights often involves new processes of marketization, creating mechanisms for the monetary exchange or transfer of fishing rights or privileges between individuals, corporations, or other collectives, and relatedly, commodification, reshaping the access rights to fish into objects that can be bought and sold. (Carothers and Chambers 2012, 39)

This definition of privatization differs from more general definitions in that it goes beyond merely the legal transference of clear private property rights to un-owned, state-owned, or community-owned property to include larger processes of marketization

and commodification (Castree 2010; Carothers and Chambers 2012). The growth of corporate capitalism is connected to the implementation of neoliberal trade policies that have facilitated increased globalization of food and labour, resulting in increased mobility of commodities, labour, and capital within global production chains, including aquaculture (Phyne et al. 2006) and, I would argue, seafood processing. Aquaculture more specifically has been aligned with neoliberal practices attributed to the historical time frame in which it prospered within Europe and North America (Young and Matthews 2010). There is a current shift in capitalism that reaps more profit from financial processes than production processes, which has led to a focus on the role of finance in increasing capital flows within corporate capital production systems.

### ***2.2.3 Financialization***

Consideration of capitalist economic systems including their financial systems is central to political economic theorizing. Epstein (2002) defines financialization as “the increasing importance of financial markets, financial motives, financial institutions, and financial elites in the operation of the economy and its governing institutions, both at the national and international level” (1). Within the current state of advanced capitalism, we have seen the “rise of finance” in which finance has reached a new, never-before-seen state of global expansion and fluidity. Sassen (2014) argues:

What is new and characteristic of our current era is the capacity of finance to develop enormously complex instruments that allow it to securitize that broadest-ever, historically speaking, range of entities and processes; further, continuous advances in electronic networks and tools make for seemingly unlimited multiplier effects. This rise of finance is consequential for the larger economy. While traditional banking is about selling money that the bank has, finance is about selling something it does not have. (10)

Essentially, within any financial transaction, debt to financial institutions (and, increasingly, nonfinancial institutions) that is accrued by corporations or individuals contributes to an inflated promise of future profit through speculation around the future value of the purchase. However, financialization is about more than banks and speculation. As argued by Lapavitsas (2013), it has three underlying tendencies: 1) the financialization of monopoly capitals that are able to “finance the bulk of their investment without relying heavily on banks and mostly by drawing on retained profits;” 2) the restructuring of banks; and 3) “the financialization of the personal revenue of workers and households across social classes” reflected in increased debt and reliance on investments (800–1). Neoliberalism has been an important driver of these three tendencies, but financialization entails historically specific processes and, at meso- and micro-levels, “[t]he interaction between finance and the rest of the economy is mediated by a complex set of institutional structures that often reflect historical, political, customary and even cultural factors” (Lapavitsas 2013, 799). Thus how financialization processes develop is somewhat specific to place.

Financialization processes are associated with increased debt, stagnating wages, and increased corporate capital control (Palley 2007). Stockhammer (2004) links the spread of financialization to post-Keynesian, neoliberal managerial changes that saw managers become shareholders, and to related shifts in investment priorities away from supporting expanded production towards generating profits by buying and selling assets. Corporations’ use of financialization processes contributes to the redistribution of social power among financial investors and towards monopoly capital with the capacity to

finance acquisitions and growth through internal mechanisms, and away from wage labour, small producers, and competitive capital. Consequently, financialization also has real ramifications at the micro level, including for regions', communities', and labour's access to resources and good jobs. This is because, as finance becomes the focal point for profit and investment becomes more fluid and mobile, companies become less invested in production, in labour forces, and in communities at the local level (Stockhammer 2004). Therefore, workers' localities and rhythms become more bent towards capital profiteering, and less embedded within local ecological and reproductive rhythms.

Private equity and hedge funds are growing areas of financialization. Private equity firms will normally take over a company or part of a company, but do not hold companies for any length of time, with, on average, three- to seven-year turnover rates (Daniel 2012; Klimek and Bjørkhaug 2015). As explained by Vander Stichele (2015) in the context of the agriculture industry,

[h]edge funds' and private equity funds' involvement illustrate the high pressure to make profits. To finance an operation, the funds tend to rely mostly on debt (with hedge funds using very high leverage ratios) as well as on rich investors attracted by the promise of high profits. The funds typically sell the land and financial assets after six to eight years – a short period of time compared with the lifetime investments that farmers put into their farms. High profits are needed to repay the loans and the investors, in addition to paying the typically high bonuses of fund managers. The emphasis on short-term financial gains results in practices that can easily lead to breaches in the rights of local communities and farmers, and provides few incentives to invest in long-term environmentally sustainable agricultural production. (261)

The private equity model of profit, or value accumulation, erodes connections between profit generation and particular products, resources, communities, and workers because of its lack of focus on improving production as a source of profit

and the short-term vision of the investors.

It is not specifically the growth of corporations that defines financialization, but the increase in the role of finance – whether markets, motives, or institutions – in the role of capital accumulation processes, even over actual production (Isakson 2014). The exponential growth and profit, or capital gains, that new modes of finance allow are unprecedented, and carry a significant amount of weight in distributing social power. The rise of financialization is tied to the shift in the economy from a manufacturing to a service economy. Financial banking is an integral part of the service economy due to its ability to provide large amounts of capital on loan (Carroll 2004). As the economy shifts focus to service-based industries, financial institutions and those associated with the service industry increase their political clout and become more influential in government decision-making. As a result, many corporations hold considerably more power in terms of labour and the environment.

Nick Dyer-Witheyford (2002) states that this new mode of finance is external to relations of production:

This hypertrophy of financial capital overlays the conflicts at other points on capital's circuit with a polarizing tension between those for whom the money markets figure as an unimaginably fast means to affluence and those for whom they manifest as a terrifying whirlwind moving with disconnected and destructive logic. It is as uprising against the generalized money-form of capitalist power that we can understand the fluidity and comprehensiveness of the new combinations. (13)

With financialization processes, economic gains come from the ability to buy and sell a company (increasing its profit) more than from improving the production process itself.

And these new modes of finance are tied to increasingly risky venture takeovers that further distance workers, communities, and ecological rhythms from company priorities and profit accumulation (Rossman 2010). Exploitation of workers and resources, tied to decreasing access and rights, via privatization within neoliberal restructuring, is thus a vital concern with the increased financialization of agro-industries. The increase in exploitation is connected to increasing misalignment, eroding workers' ability to have control over, and thus align, their work rhythms with their other life rhythms.

Understanding *how* this shift in power (and rhythm) to corporations, enabled through the growth of finance, is manifesting among workers, communities, and ecologies may be aided by an analysis of the historical trajectory of labour force change in an industry.

Understanding the multiple manifestations of mobility and immobility of a labour force highlights how power dynamics play out within corporations, and how they are shaped by government policies.

### **2.3 Theorizing Mobile Labour in Canada**

Mobility of people, goods, and technologies has been increasing globally. This has led to descriptions of our current time as an “era of mobilities” (Halfacree 2012). Mobility has not, however, increased equally among all places and people; indeed, the increased mobility of some may result in increased immobility of others (Sheller and Urry 2006).

Mobility, Silvey (2005) argues, is socially embedded in that it reflects, as well as reinforces, divisions within social organization such as those of gender, race, and class (among many others), and “is ascribed with meanings in and through existing hierarchies and spatialities of power, rather than a result of them”(138). Intersections of difference

both define and redefine power relations as well as “community” politics.

Sheller and Urry (2006) identify this focus on mobilities as the “new mobilities paradigm.” One area of focus within this “era of mobilities” is employment-related geographical mobility or E-RGM.<sup>7</sup> E-RGM, similar to other mobilities, is on the rise (Rodriguez and Mearns 2012), despite the fact that people have been moving for the purposes of work for generations. Roseman et al. (2015) encourage new research on E-RGM to take up a “spectrum approach” as a way to contribute to the “mobility turn,” especially as it relates to work. The “spectrum approach” refers to the range of spatio-temporal mobility for the purposes of work, from working at home to extended travel, possibly over years and across continents (Cresswell et al. 2016). The argument made by Cresswell et al. (2016) for the significance of taking up a mobilities lens using a spectrum approach to E-RGM is its inclusion of intra-scalar analysis, mobility and immobility, production and social reproduction, and sensitivity to the larger meanings and narratives of mobility (re)constructed within specific times, spaces and places (7).

The dissertation draws on Buscher and Urry’s (2009) concept of mobilities as “movement potential movement and blocked movement as well as voluntary/temporary (im)mobilities, practices of dwelling and ‘nomadic’ place-making [that] are all conceptualized as constitutive of social, economic and political processes.” Mobility, as a theoretical lens, offers another angle with which to understand how power is diffused as workers and corporate managers navigate raced and gendered local, national, and

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7. Employment-Related Geographical Mobility (E-RGM), or mobility for the purposes of work, is the focus of a large Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant called On The Move that focuses specifically on mobility as it relates to work within Canada, as well as internationally.

international labour markets, and economic and immigration policies and opportunities. Roseman et al. (2015), use a political economic framework to “bring together insights from the ‘mobilities’ literature with those from research on work and the power and the politics of mobility that attend to class, gender, citizenship, and other differentiations in the Canadian context” (177). This framework is useful, as it encompasses an intersectional approach to citizenship and mobility as they relate to larger power structures within the political economy of Canada.

The context of this study spans local, national, and global geographies and economies in terms of the workforce as well as the industry, and due to this, the mobility of people, products, and livelihoods. When large-scale movements of work and products are occurring, how, when, and who are determined across local, national and global scales via policies at all levels. Also, as much as there is movement, there are also static, stable, and rooted aspects of the labour pool, as well as the product. These sites of rootedness or stability are connected to specific geographic ecologies and locations of labour. In these rooted instances place matters. Just as significant as place are people, and this is where an intersectional analysis aids in understanding how labour-hiring practices (tied to federal and provincial immigration policies), and traditional gender and racialized divisions of labour within industry in specific locations, create and recreate racialized, classed, and gendered work experiences that define not only who is working and who is not, but also who has legal rights of rootedness or mobility, via citizenship, and who does not.

### ***2.3.1 Citizenship and Mobility and the Human/Non-Human Line***

Citizenship is central to this study because of my focus on how corporations have more recently targeted interprovincial mobility and temporary foreign workers and their associated citizenship/residence rights to gain increased control over labour and production. Citizenship theory is key when looking at the very global and mobile capital, resources, technologies, and migrant labour that have resulted in increased flexibility and diversification for corporations while at the same time increasing both the mobility and immobility of the workforce, through usage of TFWPs (MacDonald 2006). Different types of workers (local, interprovincial migrants, temporary foreign workers) have different sets of citizenship rights that affect their ability to change jobs, qualify for benefits, unionize, move to a destination community, etc. They also face different kinds of employment-related challenges related to the costs of travel, housing, and balancing responsibilities at home and work (Benach et al. 2010; Brysk and Shafir 2004; Fudge 2011; Gravel et al. 2009; Hennebry 2011; Marsden 2011; Preibisch 2007). The labour force composition and a range of other policies can influence the relationship among the industry, its workers, and the adjacent communities, and thus the potential for economic development.

The citizenship theory that I am drawing on for this project uses citizenship to highlight the role of the nation-state in immigration law and policy to differentiate migrant workers, thus creating a labour supply that is excluded from or limited in its civil, political, and social rights. This has been referred to as a “citizenship gap” (Brysk and Shafir 2004) or “partial citizenship” (Vosko 2006). Understanding how different workers

exist in this gap, whether through company-town models, interprovincial mobility, or the use of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, is important to understanding the impacts of policies and practices.

Attention to mobility and its role in citizenship call attention to the potential contribution employment-related mobility can make to labour force participation, turnover, and work quality due to the different ways in which participants are or are not able to move freely within workplace spaces, communities, and countries (Cresswell 2010; Hannam et al. 2006; Sheller and Urry 2006; Buscher and Urry 2009; Harvey 1989). Workers who travel long distances to work will logically want to work as much as they can while at the work destination, and are more likely to put in overtime hours and to be more willing to take on extra shifts. Workers who are travelling long distances and are tied to employers through immigration programs, such as the TFWP, are more likely not to complain, no matter what is asked of them, due to the fear of losing their employment and being sent home. Silvey (2005, 144) states, “feminist migration research also aims to identify and unpack the power relations embedded in, shaped through, and reinforced by migrants’ bodies in particular places and across space.” Complementing this argument is the work of Grosfoguel et al. (2014). They argue for the importance of colonial legacies and racism in understanding how complex power constellations (of race, sex, and gender) sort migrants above or below a “zone of being.” This, they argue, acts like a line sorting those who are seen and treated as human beings from those who are not. This human/non-human line is crucial to understanding the significance of allowing an immigration policy that delineates different citizenship rights, such as the TFWP, to exist.

Workplaces and immigration policies such as the TFWP that limit citizenship rights and labour mobility have aided in workplace restructuring and reorganization of labour pools, which in turn has led to increasing work precarity. Neoliberal corporate capitalist work and migration policies that support the creation of spaces where local labour is deemed unfit, while at the same time more easily exploitable labour is justified, result in decreased work quality and more precarious work spaces for everyone.

### ***2.3.2 Theorizing Precarious Labour***

Leah Vosko (2006a) defines precarious employment as:

Work for remuneration characterized by uncertainty, low income, and limited social benefits and statutory entitlement. Precarious employment is shaped by the relationship between employment status (i.e. self-employed or paid employment), form of employment (e.g. temporary or permanent, part-time or full-time), and dimensions of labour market insecurity, as well as social context (e.g. occupation, industry, and geography) and social location (or the interaction of social relations, such as gender, and legal and political categories, such as citizenship). (102)

Vosko (2006a, 2006b, and 2010) is conscious of the multiple and varied aspects of precarious work that are defined by limited social benefits, statutory entitlements, job insecurity, low wages, and high risks of ill health. The framework she employs focuses on work that is undergoing restructuring, and she analyzes restructuring inclusively by combining legal, economic, political, psychosocial, sociological, and statistical insights into her analysis, in order to investigate multiple employment strata. As Vosko (2006b) explains, “These distinct perspectives allow for the analysis of precarious employment at multiple levels – from the level of employment status and form of employment to the levels of the individual and the job, and from the level of occupation to the levels of industry and geography” (12).

The literature on precarious work shows precarious labour is increasing, and posits that this is a result of increased globalization and neoliberal policies that restructure and relocate industries and migrants as a “regulatory market tool” (Bauder et al. 2006). Bauder et al. (2006) pinpoint reduction of wages, manipulation of labour standards, and manipulation of labour practices as key mechanisms of this market regulation. Central to my theorizing on the changing corporate structure of industries, tied to neoliberalism and the growth of financialization, are the way these are changing labour forces and affecting work quality, such as by decreasing job security. The effects of these changes hinge on how the TFWP, as well as manipulations of work quality, act as a market regulation mechanism to create “qualitative” aspects of a labour shortage.

### ***2.3.3 Temporary Foreign Workers, Precarity of Labour, and Qualitative Shortages***

The TFWP in Canada is a government immigration policy, expanded under Stephen Harper’s Conservative government and justified by the neoliberal political economic ideology of the time. Understanding the TFWP, and its related diminished work quality and worker agency, from the perspective of feminist political economy requires delving deeper into the connections among work, more recent capital dynamics within the industries themselves (through the increase of multinational conglomerates and private equity in the area), and the use of mobile workers. Preibisch states that immigration policies in high-income countries have become important arenas for labour regulation that aid in maintaining Canada’s global competitiveness as well as a flexible workforce by creating or recreating gender, racial/ethnic, and citizenship inequalities (Preibisch 2007; Preibisch and Binford 2007).

Preibisch's work builds on other Canadian studies, such as that of Sharma (2006), that show that governments, employers, and migrant placement agencies hold gendered and racialized preferences for migrant workers, who face even more severe limitations and options if their work contract is unfavorable or, worse, unsafe (Preibisch and Binford 2007). She argues that this ability of employers to hand-pick their employees to maintain their position within the global political economy allows for more than just the accrual of a cheap labour supply; it is also a process of labour reorganization. She states that "clearly the benefits of this separate tier of workers go beyond the provision of a stable supply of (cheaper) labor, but also allow employers to reorganize the production process in specific ways" (Preibisch 2010, 432). These insights include the role migrant workers play in the current globalized economy, and specifically the global agrifood system, in increasing competition and labour flexibility (Preibisch 2007; Sharma 2006), and the increasing precariousness of occupations that employ migrant workers (Fudge 2011).

This literature also posits that aspects of labour shortages, which spur international labour mobility, can be manufactured or qualitative in nature (Sharma 2006). Sharma (2006) argues that labour shortages in some job areas in Canada that rely on unfree labour may be more qualitative than quantitative (98). Mobility of workers, their ability or lack thereof to access citizenship, and their control over their work environments are not isolated to specific locations, occupations, or time frames. Understanding the larger global, economic, and political trends within corporate capitalism, which is inherently global, sheds lights on how regions and communities, and the industries embedded in them, avail themselves of and manipulate multiple worker

(im)mobilities, resulting in less control and less safe work for workers, but increased profit for companies.

### ***2.3.4 Labour Agency***

Within globalization frameworks and much of political economy, workers and their location have usually been depicted as victims of capitalist-induced large-scale restructuring (Massey 2008). Within the literature that takes up worker agency, the main source of active resistance or change has been unions (Cumbers et al. 2008; Herod 2000, 2001; Wills 2005). Social movements and communities, in tandem with each other or as stand-alone actors, have also been addressed (Fairbrother 2008; Fine 2005; Lier and Stokke 2006). Agency has also been described as any occurrence used by workers to improve their own, or other workers', experience (Castree 2007). Drawing on Coe and Jordhus-Lier's (2011) paper, Oseland et al. (2012) state, "Workers occupy multiple subject positions that create complex landscapes of opportunity and constraint; landscapes which position some in structures with considerable room for reworking power relations, and others without much opportunity for meaningful labour agency" (96). They argue that labour agency and its connection to cross-scalar mobility are largely connected to the ways in which power is being "reworked and contested" (Oseland et al. 2012, 94). Massey (2008) as well recognizes that while the global has usually been depicted as victimizing the local, different "places" hold different power relationships to the global, some with much more influence and power than others, and this shifts over time. As this case study will illustrate, the current structure of the seafood processing

industry in NB and some other parts of Canada and its ties to larger multinational networks position regional communities and workers in a scenario in which what little power they had accrued is now being eroded.

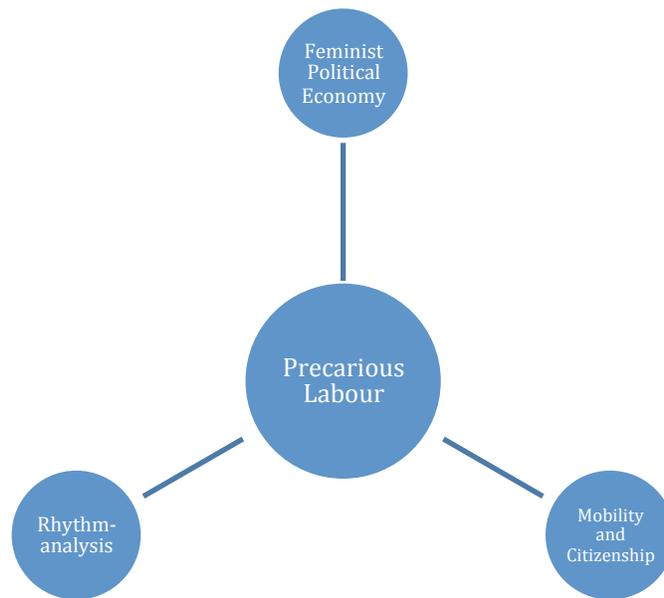
## **2.4 Corporate Capital and Work Rhythms, Mobility, and Precariousness**

New global agro-food networks are changing the ways in which societies, especially in high-income countries, understand and access food, as most people are now removed from the growing and production processes. Aquaculture and seafood processing are among the agro-food industries that have been propelled forward via increasingly efficient production models. These models are tied to the globalized adoption of neoliberal practices, including increased vertical and horizontal integration of supply chains, increased technological use, changing regulatory regimes, and the reduced role of government (Busch 2010).

As agro-food industries restructure through financialization processes in an effort to retain a competitive advantage, labour is also restructured, increasing its precarity and mobility. Privileged positions within Canadian society, in terms of citizenship, race, gender, class, age, ability, etc., are indicative of an ability to align capitalist-induced work rhythms with family, reproductive, cultural, and ecological rhythms. Thus, the more mobile and/or precarious one's work, the more misaligned one's work rhythm may be with both the family's and the body's sleep cycles and/or time zones. Work schedules may also clash with school, daycare, and other family members' work schedules (such as shift work or work that depends on natural cycles, such as seasonal work). Conflicts with work and family rhythms may increase stress, but also make access to support (either

institutional, such as day care, or familial) that much harder to avail oneself of. This may play a role in who is able to work, or who wants to work, in these occupations, especially when pay remains at minimum wage, or just above. While there may exist a skills mismatch, there may also exist a “rhythm mismatch” within the Canadian workforce.

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework**



The conceptual framework developed in this chapter aids in understanding how the reported labour shortages in service and agriculture industries that justify the use of the TFWP are also restructuring labour in increasing conflict with life outside of work. Feminist political economy, I argue, while able to encompass the connections between inequalities in labour and capital, does not incorporate robust understanding of the disconnection between capital’s ongoing reliance on, and yet reorganization of, natural resources and workers’ time and space. I use rhythm as a metaphor throughout this

dissertation that provides room for a discussion of the fundamental friction at the heart of complex interactions among natural resources, governments, neoliberal economies, workers, families and communities.

## **2.5 Chapter Summary**

I draw on a feminist political economic conceptual framework to address the complexity of life in the fisheries and for the fisher-workers of coastal NB. The use of the feminist political economic framework alongside additional concepts, such as mobility, citizenship, precarity, and rhythm, allows me to understand changing patterns of labour mobility within work and the changing nature of work quality and labour agency in seafood processing in my NB case study within the current political and economic context of neoliberalism, globalization, corporate capitalism, and financialization.

The remainder of this dissertation examines and compares the processes influencing labour force composition as well as the number and quality of jobs associated with intensive salmon aquaculture development and capture seafood processing in rural NB communities. A central focus is on *how* labour force composition has changed in seafood processing in this province to date, including the transition from local, to NL migrant, to temporary foreign workers in some NB aquaculture and capture processing plants. Key elements in the conceptual framework lead us to focus on the changing contribution of the capture seafood processing and aquaculture industries to rural community economic development in that province.

The theoretical framework for this work places specific emphasis on corporate finance, capital and labour mobility, and postcolonial intersectionality to understand the

historical trajectory of gendered and racialized labour mobility patterns in seafood processing in Canada, and their current manifestation within a local NB community that is heavily reliant on migrant labour. The importance of an intersectional analysis when investigating workforce composition and change in this industry is due not only to its significant racial, class, and gendered hiring practices, work organization, and social organization, but also to the interaction among them, and the resulting ramifications for shaping the labour pool. Theoretical additions address the current state of labour power within an advanced capitalist state that is different from the mode of capitalism at play even a few decades ago. This is not suggesting that workers (or communities) are powerless, but that power and its ability to be contested are based on multiple factors that, for the case study in NB, situate very little labour power in the hands of workers, and significantly more in the hands of large, multinational corporations.

## **3 Methodology and Methods**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The research questions for this dissertation arose from my master's and preliminary PhD research, combined with my background knowledge of the positions of vulnerability and invisibility of many seafood processing workers within larger socioeconomic institutions and processes. The catalyst for the study arose through research I conducted for my master's degree in the rural and coastal community of Prince Rupert, BC, in 2008, where I found changes in the seafood processing workforce due to a combination of the restructuring of the fishery and the economic boom in Fort McMurray, Alberta. The overall finding was an increase in precarious work environments, which were affecting the remaining workers' occupational health and safety, and were aggravated by longstanding racial, class, and gendered norms both at work and in the community (Knott 2009). The original plan for my PhD research was to expand on my master's research by studying many more of the rural coastal communities in BC where seafood processing plants were located in order to establish larger patterns across time and space. I received funding through the NETHRN-BC project to do some preliminary research in BC, including visits to the communities of Ucluelet, Tofino, Port Alberni, Campbell River, Port Hardy, and Quadra Island, where I conducted key informant interviews with seafood processing plant managers and local politicians (see table 3.1 for an overview of these interviews). In these communities, I witnessed the significant increase in the presence of aquaculture companies, and the important changes to work organization and

job tasks in seafood processing work associated with the shift from processing harvested wild seafood to processing farmed salmon. Interviews I conducted suggested these changes influenced who was working in these plants, the workers' range of opportunities, and the challenges the workers confronted, such as extended commutes. This led to research questions that centred on how this new seafood product, as well as new processing organization, related regulations, and season length were affecting the workforce, including who worked in processing, if they were affecting it at all. In the end I changed my focus, and chose to use exploratory methods, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis of a region in NB where both aquaculture and capture seafood processing coexist, to try to answer these questions. A historically informed case study was vital to understanding how, within one industry, labour force changes occur. All methods were designed, executed, and analyzed using a qualitative framework that allowed me to investigate labour in the seafood processing industry from multiple perspectives, but with attention to the largely marginal voices of workers.

This chapter first discusses the different methods I used, including how they were implemented and how the data were analyzed in this study. Second, the benefits of using more than one method are discussed, including how this improved the data analysis in this research project. Third is a discussion of the methodological considerations that shaped the methods that were chosen. Lastly the limitations of the methods are presented.

## **3.2 Methods**

Within this historical case study of a seafood-processing region, I chose a qualitative framework complemented by semi-structured expert interviews and document analysis as my main research methods. The document analysis focused on newspaper stories and press releases, but also encompassed selected government and industry reports. The interviews included a short section of structured demographic questions that asked basic information such as gender, age, ethnicity, and years worked in seafood processing, as well as questions pertaining to commuting that aimed to map commuting distances. The participant observation was carried out during the twelve weeks I resided in the area.

### ***3.2.1 Case Study***

The definition of a case study varies quite a bit in the theoretical and methodological literature. In an attempt to create an accurate definition, Gerring (2004) provides an overview of different definitions and establishes his own in order to represent a case study more concretely and accurately. He defines a case study as “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units” (342). Using a case study of changing seafood processing labour forces in one region of NB was a useful method when addressing the main research question regarding why and how labour forces have changed over time, and with what consequences. It addressed directly the apparent paradox of growing use of the TFWP in a rural areas of high unemployment because it allowed an in-depth focus on the changes to the labour force as well as those to company ownership structure, in the seafood industry, over time, as a way to investigate the underlying claims about labour shortages that have been used by

seafood processing companies in Atlantic Canada to justify their reliance on the TFWP to compensate for the reported labour shortages. The focus on seafood processing in one area of NB not only allows for insight into and comparison within Atlantic Canada, but also more generally for insight into industries such as agriculture and service-based jobs found in both rural and urban centres that rely on migrant workers to fill reported labour shortages (Hennebry and Preibisch 2010; Marsden 2011).

### ***3.2.2 Participant Observation***

I stayed in the study area in NB for a twelve-week period between July and October of 2012. During that time, I engaged in participant observation. Participant observation can take many forms, and is defined by Dewalt (2010) as, “a way to collect data in a relatively unstructured manner in naturalistic settings by ethnographers who observe and/or take part in the common and uncommon activities of the people being studied” (260). In my case it included general observation of the lives of workers and others living in these communities, and a reflexive consideration of my observations via field notes. Living in the region during my fieldwork meant that participation in workers’ and others’ lives occurred spontaneously on several occasions. Aside from attending more formal activities such as farmers’ markets and plant tours, the sharing of meals with people involved in, or associated with, seafood processing was a common occurrence in my attempts to meet key leaders in the community and to recruit participants.

The size of the community (and the speed with which word travelled) both helped and hindered the recruitment process. The small size of the main community made it easier to identify the community leaders among core groups of workers, as well

as to approach the majority of business owners and others and to access their contact information. It hindered the research somewhat as well, however, in that often the workers, and key informants, as well as most other people in the community, already knew I was in the area conducting fieldwork before I contacted them. As a result, it was difficult to acquire participants without the knowledge of those connected to management and office positions in the plants. For example, following up on the lead on a key informant contact by telephone, I was invited to meet at a house, which I assumed was the person's home. When I arrived, it was the contact's place of employment as a homecare worker to an elderly woman. I was invited to join them for dinner (and luckily at this point knew to have food available to contribute). Shortly after we started dinner, the woman's daughter entered. She was a high-ranking employee at the multinational fish farm, and had decided to drop by and join us for dinner. Thus, not surprisingly, no interviews with workers arose from that contact.

In addition to meal sharing, which provided information via informal conversation, I also held informal conversations at the local farmers' market, the local pub, the grocery store, and the gas station, and made observations during plant tours and visits. Data was collected in notebooks during my fieldwork.

### *Analysis*

My notes were analyzed after my return in a similar way as my interview data, with coding for key themes, although not as intensively. This was due to the fact that they contained more reflexive discussions around my fieldwork experience and my

perception of my role in the process, and were in the form of somewhat personal diary entries as a way to reflect on the experience in which I was engaging. A key piece of data gleaned from this experience was the number of people willing to chat with me informally, but who would not agree to conduct an interview. People wanted to talk, but not on the record. The usefulness of this method was the informal, off-the-record knowledge it provided of the changes to the seafood processing industry. People did not shy away from discussing the changes that had come to the work in seafood processing plants, especially after the aquaculture industry experienced an economic boom and the use of the TFWP started. In addition, staying on site and engaging in the everyday of the area helped with an awareness of place – how small the region felt, how visible I felt I was in it, and how interconnected many people were.

### ***3.2.3 Semi-Structured Interview Method***

Semi-structured interviews are a way both to explore a topic and allow space for marginal voices, such as those of seafood processing workers. For example, Magdalena Suarez-Ortega (2012) argues that an in-depth interview “captures the processes of economic, political and cultural change from the perspective of workers” (189). In addition to exploring a topic and providing space for marginal voices, semi-structured interviews have also been widely used to understand how peoples’ lived realities interact with larger institutions. In fact, interviews have become so commonplace that most people are comfortable with this format because the “interview society” that exists in much of North America has prepared people for what to expect and how to act (Silverman 1997).

Interviews can be performed in both structured and unstructured styles. Semi-structured interviews use a mixture of both. The questions are set, but open, and thus participants are allowed to answer however they wish, and in as much depth as they wish, during an interview. The benefits of using this type of interview style are that it allows the participants to say what they want, and it permits the interviewer to probe further and have participants expand on their answers, but still stay within a specific framework (May 2001). This method is also qualitative, not quantitative, in its analysis and epistemological basis, and as such is not striving for standardization and comparability the way a survey or a structured interview would be, and therefore it is not concerned with validating its scientific basis, but with providing a reliable, vigorous, and complex or deep analysis of the data (Kirby et al. 2006; May 2001). One measure consistently used to enhance reliability and rigour is saturation. Saturation is understood to occur when the number of interviews has reached a level at which no new information is being brought forward (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Johnson and Rowlands 2012).

In total, forty-four interviews were conducted for this research. The preliminary research was conducted in 2010 via semi-structured interviews with eight key informants, including a BC aquaculture business representative, five aquaculture and capture fish-plant managers, and two community mayors in BC. These data were used as a starting place for designing a study using similar kinds of interviews in NB.

The core dataset includes thirty-six interviews conducted in 2012/2013, of which thirty-two occurred in the study region of NB (with current and former workers, community businesses owners, and key informants) and four in NL (with NL fish-plant

workers who had commuted to the NB region to work). In addition to basic demographic data, the interviews collected information about 1) the changing labour demands in the industry; 2) management's strategies for meeting these demands; 3) current and former workers' experiences; and 4) community and local government perspectives (see appendix 4 for the interview schedules).

### ***3.2.4 Recruitment***

In BC, I traveled to nine different rural coastal communities over a two-month period (July 2010 to August 2010), where fish farm and capture processing plants are located. The intent was to meet with managers and business representatives in the area. These meetings were informal, but I did carry out eight semi-structured interviews, as mentioned above. All but one occurred in the interviewee's office, with the eighth taking place in the interviewee's home. Participants were recruited through scripted telephone calls made to the businesses, and in some cases through visits to plants. The main purpose of these visits was to tour the plants, observe labour force composition as well as the conditions of the plants, and inform workers, union representatives, and managers that I was conducting research on this topic.

In NB in 2012, I interviewed three broad types of participants. The first group comprised key informants, including aquaculture and aquaculture-related company representatives, capture and processing plant managers, community organization representatives, and municipal governments. The second group consisted of former capture and aquaculture employees, while the third group was composed of current aquaculture and capture fish-processing employees, including international migrant

workers. Each category of participant necessitated a different recruitment strategy.

Recruitment of key informant participants began with scripted telephone calls to aquaculture companies, capture fish processing companies, community organizations and businesses, community migrant-worker organizations and/or church groups which aid migrant workers, and community government offices. During the phone calls, details of my research were provided and volunteer participation sought (see appendix 1). Former and current workers, including NL workers, were recruited through partner organizations using information flyers that described my study. I posted the flyers in various locations in the region, such as bulletin boards at grocery stores, community centres, and laundromats (see appendix 2). Additional recruitment occurred through snowball sampling from worker interviews. I received a low response rate, with no workers responding to the flyers. Instead, all workers were recruited through non-random snowball sampling via family or friendship connections they had with business interviewees in the community. From there, other workers were recruited. This low response was not completely unexpected, as I had been warned this could be an issue, especially with the migrant worker population. As such, part of the consent process was an agreement not to publish the location of my research or the names of companies in order to protect workers' identities and livelihoods, with the hope that this would encourage workers to participate (see table 3.2 for a list of pseudonyms for the plants). To this end, participants were also informed that the research was voluntary, and that they had the right not to participate, not to answer any questions, and to end an interview or withdraw from the study at any time. The consent forms also provided contact

information for the university ethics board that approved the research (see appendix 3).

**Table 3.1 Capture and Farmed Company Key**

<b>Capture and Farmed Seafood Company Key</b>	
Multinational Fish Farm	Large aquaculture company in NB that has developed into a large multinational corporation.
Small Fish Farm	The smaller aquaculture company in NB.
The Lobster Plant	The other capture seafood processing company located within the region of the case study that processes lobster.
NB Cannery	Original NB herring cannery.
Grocer	Large Canadian grocery store conglomerate.
BC Cannery	BC Processing Plant that dominated the industry in BC (bought by Canadian Grocer in the 1960s).
BC Brand	Brand name of BC canned fish product.
American Seafood	Large multinational American seafood company (owns BC Cannery and BC Seafood Brand, merges with the NB Cannery plant). This company name is used interchangeably with the NB Cannery plant company name in press releases.
American Food Co.	Was the second-largest US food company in 2000. Buys American Seafood in 2000 then sells it to a private equity firm in 2003.

In the end, thirty-six interviews were conducted (see table 3.1) – thirty-two from NB and four from NL – twenty-one of which were with current and former workers in seafood processing. The interviews were between twenty and 120 minutes in length.

Interviewees also included four human resource/plant manager representatives who worked in four separate plants in the area. One other plant in an adjacent area did not return my calls or messages, so it was not included in the study. Sixteen interviews were conducted with people affiliated with local businesses and organizations in the area. Of these interviewees, one was a former international migrant seafood processing worker who had become a permanent resident, and ten were former plantworkers from the

region, including one from NL. These interviewees spoke to their experiences as workers in the plants and why, if they were no longer working, they had exited the industry.

**Table 3.2 Number and Category of Interview Participants**

	<b>NB</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>BC</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>No. Interviewed</b>	32	4	8	44
<b>Worked in Plants now</b>	6	2	0	8
<b>Worked in Plants previously</b>	11	2	0	13
<b>Total Worked in Plant</b>	17	4	0	21
<b>Aquaculture Industry</b>	12	0	3	15
<b>Capture Industry</b>	14	4	0	17
<b>Business Owners/manager/Key Informants</b>	20	0	3	23
<b>Plant Management/HR</b>	4	0	5	9

Eight interviews were held with current workers, six with local NB workers (of whom one was a TFW), and two with NL workers. In addition, four key informant interviews were held with government officials, and with participants associated with local fishery-related organizations. Of the thirty-six interviews held in NB and NL, twenty-four were with women and twelve with men. The ethnic breakdown of participants as self-reported by the interviewees was as follows: thirty-three were Caucasian, two were Filipino, and one was South Asian. The average age was forty-

eight, spanning ages from nineteen to seventy-eight. Some overlap exists among NB, NL, and BC, as some interviewees had worked in two or more locations. Overlap also exists in the number of workers who worked in aquaculture and capture plants, as some interviewees had worked in both. The semi-structured interviews also included a short section of structured questions that asked about age, gender, income, race/ethnicity, and commuting times, as well as work history and experience.

I conducted interviews at times and locations convenient to participants. For key informants and community business owners, interviews were held at their places of work. Worker interviews were held in various locations, and in three cases I interviewed participants over the phone due to geographical distance. In those cases, I used the same consent form and interview schedule as in my face-to-face interviews, but read the consent form to them over the phone, and then mailed them copies for their records. Arranging places to meet was at times challenging. Finding locations that were considered safe for both the participant and me, and that were also private and would not be noticed by other community members, proved to be difficult, and may also have inhibited participation.

### ***Data Analysis***

I digitally audio-recorded all interviews with participant consent. The recordings improved accurate transcription and helped to prevent bias in the interpretation of the answers. Qualitative coding was also used to help to identify themes and organize the data around key ones. Initially the qualitative software program *NVivo* was to be used to

aid in data analysis, but due to the relatively small number of interviews, in the end, interviews were coded by hand during the transcription process and flagged for common themes, terms, and experiences that emerged. Once interviews were transcribed, a list of the noted themes and terms was compiled and the transcripts reread to see if there were areas of crossover that had been missed.

### ***3.2.5 Qualitative Document Analysis Method***

Document analysis was another important method used in my analysis of labour force changes in the seafood processing industry in NB. Document analysis can use both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In comparison to quantitative document analysis, qualitative analysis is more interpretive, aiming for discovery and verification, and was a better fit for my exploratory study. This approach uses a reflexive and non-linear interpretation of data, without the use of random or stratified methods, and the data may be presented both in numeric and narrative formats. Analysis may therefore be both textual and statistical, and results can be given in both table and text formats (Altheide 1987; Fairclough 2003). I employed only text formats because I was interested more in the qualitative discussions and framing of the TFWP, the seafood processing industry, and the aquaculture industry found within the documents, rather than quantifying what was within the content.

My analysis mainly focuses on the content of documents. However, the larger political context of the topics being discussed within these documents, such as the TFWP, labour shortages within seafood processing, the expansion of the aquaculture industry, and the increase in corporate capital in both seafood processing and

aquaculture ownership, is central to the usefulness of the content of the documents. A purposive (or selective) sample of documents related to seafood processing, the TFWP, and labour in Canada was constructed. Common to qualitative research, purposive sampling allows greater freedom to maintain analysis throughout all stages of the research process on an as-needed basis derived from findings or theoretical explorations (Miles and Huberman 1994; Silverman 2005; Strauss and Corbin 1998). Thus, the collection of newspaper articles spanned the duration of my research project from 2011 to 2016, and the articles were collected as they came available in the news media.

### *Analysis*

Relevant government, industry, and community websites, news releases, and publications made up the documents I used to explore seafood processing and aquaculture ownership changes. I also used narratives in the media and government around labour shortages in seafood processing and the seafood processing industry's reliance on the TFWP. I looked as well at the significance of aquaculture for small coastal communities. In my analysis of these documents, I looked for what was included as well as excluded, where the documents originated, who the author was, whether s/he was identified in the document, and who the intended audience was. This was essential to understanding the perspectives and power dynamics reflected within the documents. I also looked at the common discussion around employment opportunities, as well as at the benefits to community and industry from changes in industry and employment policies. Especially relevant were documents related to the TFWP around which media

coverage was extensive between 2012 and 2014. I compared these document narratives to those provided via interviews with workers, employers, community business owners, and key industry informants to see how similar or contradictory their narratives were.

For the two major companies in my study area, I primarily used documentary sources (including secondary sources on the region and other regions) to reconstruct ownership changes, consolidations and mergers via company websites, and new releases, which allowed me to understand corporate ownership structures both at the time of the research and leading up to it. The results of the document analysis were complemented by the interviews and secondary historical sources.

### **3.3 Multiple Methods**

There can sometimes be confusion between the terms “mixed methods” and “multiple methods.” Mixed methods are most commonly defined as some combination of qualitative and quantitative methods used together in one study. Multiple methods have been used to define research projects that employ more than one method, but from within the same epistemological framework (i.e., all qualitative or all quantitative), but there are some definitions of mixed-method approaches that break down the definition to specify further the types of methods based on their epistemological origins, such a “qualitative dominant” mixed-method approach (Hesse-Biber 2010; Plano Clark et al. 2008). “Multiple methods” most accurately describes the work herein.

This case study intertwines findings from semi-structured interviews, qualitative document analysis, and participant observation to develop a methodological approach suitable to analyzing the complex web of individuals who function in and around the

region as employees and citizens, companies that function within and far beyond local communities, and governments that function as business-growth inducers and legal protectors of employee-citizens. It also takes into account policymakers and regulators of programs like the TFWP, labour standards, and EI. Furthermore, the history of the communities studied, the evolution of the aquaculture and seafood processing industries in the region, and the transformation of capital and labour on all scales of human activity necessitate diverse and interactive means of acquiring evidence in order to ensure a more careful explication of cheap(er) labour in New Brunswick. This research is therefore an example of a multiple-method research project.

Leckenby and Hesse-Biber (2007) argue that using more than one method provides greater groundwork for synthesis, interpretation, and exposition of the research questions, as the different methods produce different data. For example, survey data can access a large population, providing large-scale generalizable data, while focus groups or interviews can provide more nuanced, in-depth data; data may or may not be conflicting, but can work to provide a clearer understanding of the complexity of a research problem or question. In this research project, the use of qualitative document analysis provides information on the larger context of policies, media, and industry reports, which essentially inform how government, industry and the general populace, via media, construct both aquaculture and seafood processing labour in Canada, specifically regarding the TFWP. In addition, the use of document analysis illustrates the discourses communities use to regulate and speak about these industries. By combining findings from document analysis with those from semi-structured interviews and

participant observation, this thesis provides a more localized context that offers an understanding of not only what people who are affected by these industries – and who have worked or are still employed within them – have to say about these experiences, but also how they have negotiated and continue to negotiate the rules and regulations that govern them. In this way, the data produced by using these multiple methods, whether complementary or contradictory in content, yields a fuller and richer understanding of aquaculture and seafood processing labour over time and their ramifications for future employment, as well as for the larger community.

### **3.4 Methodology**

Quantitative and qualitative research methods are for the most part described as oppositional and dichotomized. In most cases, it is not so much the methods that are dichotomous but the methodologies, epistemologies, and paradigms to which they have been relegated. Quantitative methods are generally associated with a paradigm that includes traditional positivist scientific models based on objective, replicable pursuit of a knowable truth. In comparison, qualitative methods are usually found within paradigms that are subjective, inter-subjective, intertextual, situated in lived experience, and theoretically based in phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, and grounded theory (Kirby et al. 2006). Therefore, qualitative research is usually an interpretative study of not just the focus of the research, but also of awareness of how the study is carried out and the interplay of both the subject and method with the researcher. As Elizabeth St. Pierre (2011) states, a “researcher’s aim in interpretive research is to try to understand the meaning ordinary people (the person, the individual) make of their lives, to do

fieldwork in natural settings where participants live, to elicit their descriptions of everyday lived experience in their own language, and then to reproduce as accurately as possible that meaning and experience in detailed descriptions in the research” (42).

Therefore, for this research I locate myself within a qualitative methodological framework, pulling from this to inform readers how data gathering and data analysis were planned, organized, and carried out.

Within critical and feminist methodologies there exists the recognition that race, class, and gender, as well as many other factors such as disability and age, play a role in interview dynamics that can skew results (Edwards 1990; Phoenix 2001). Interviews are a common method for getting at sensitive data that can sometimes seem invasive, especially when done face to face, as the questions being asked and discussed are often personal life experiences that are then made public when the research is published and presented. Also, interviews allow little time for interviewees’ reflection in the moment, and researchers respond in real time to the participants without the ability to reflect before responding. This adds complexity for participants, especially if they are from marginal or vulnerable populations, and foregrounds ethical considerations for researchers. Thus, awareness of power differentials between interviewer and participant are important and are instituted with qualitative, critical, feminist epistemologies that frame my methods (Anderson and Hatton 2000; Cannon 1988; Edwards 1990; Griffin and Phoenix 1994; Liamputtog 2007).

When I was conducting interviews with seafood processing workers, power differentials existed. As all but two interviewees were older than I am, and the majority

of interviewees were visibly from the same racial/ethnic background as I am (white), class, and to a lesser extent race/ethnicity differences, comprised the main areas in which power differentials existed. It is not possible to equalize power dynamics completely, but I attempted to address these issues through an awareness of the power differential going into interviews, so as to be conscious of the interviewees' comfort levels, as well as by using plain language, having interviewees pick the location, time, and duration of the interviews, and allowing them to direct the flow of the interview questions.

Precautions were also taken to protect participants I interviewed. Thus, in addition to keeping all participants' names confidential, I chose to exclude the real names of all seafood companies, local businesses, and communities in all my published work. In order to discuss the different companies that are associated with the region in NB, I have created descriptive pseudonyms (see table 3.1). Some sources used in this chapter identify this information. In these cases, the source has been blacked out in the bibliography or in-text citation, as relevant. If a scholar is interested in these sources for research purposes that person can contact me, and I will send the full citation. In addition, this research, and all research documents, received ethics approval from the Ethics Department at Memorial University, ICEHR.

### **3.5 Participation and Recruitment Issues**

While I have always been partial to participatory-style research design, despite its weaknesses (see Gatenby and Humphries 2000), the usefulness of this methodological paradigm became apparent as I was in the middle of the field and experiencing

recruitment issues. The plan was to use recruitment letters/posters and then snowball sampling as a means of interviewing workers. As I received no response from information letters, I was able to get contact information for workers via interviews with local businesses, key informants, and community organizations. Very few people, however, agreed to an actual interview, even if they were willing to meet me. Most people simply said that they were not interested, many hung up once they heard what the study was about, and one stopped an interview after reading the consent form because they did not want to risk losing their job and were worried the interview would be contravening an employee confidentiality agreement they had signed. After weeks went by and workers were not responding in the numbers I had hoped, it was brought to my attention that, at least at one of the plants, there was a rumour among the workers that the company had hired me to find out what workers were saying about the company as a way to gain information that would then be used to fire some of them. While the interviews I had conducted were already pointing to the extremely precarious position that workers were in, this provided strong evidence that workers were very concerned that they would be fired on any possible pretext and were extremely nervous about losing their jobs.

In previous research I had done for my master's thesis, I was able to drop into a community for two weeks and talk to fourteen workers. Based on this, I thought two months in NB would result in about sixty interviews. While I am sure there are multiple reasons why the two experiences were so strikingly different, I think there were a few key issues that played a role in my NB experience. Aside from workers just not being

interested in talking to me, I believe that the small, close-knit communities, the lack of preliminary research, the non-unionized environment, and the highly precarious situation for both local and migrant workers all played appreciable roles in limiting recruitment.

While the research questions themselves, which are both exploratory and descriptive in nature, were the main impetus for choosing the interview, document analysis, and participant observation methods, I also chose methods with which I have some experience (interviews), and that were feasible within my fieldwork time and budget constraints. Other methods that may have worked with my research project under different conditions were extended participant observation and focus groups. Certainly, it was evident that fieldwork undertaken as part of a long-term study over a number of years of field seasons would have familiarized the community and the workers with the objectives of the study and the research, created more trusting relationships as a communication foundation from which to work, and enabled the use of more intensive methods that may have resulted in greater participant uptake. In particular, situating such a study within a participatory framework would have supported the development of better rapport with the workers and community, as the level of suspicion the workers held regarding my intentions seriously hampered my participation rates. This can offer important insights for conducting future research of this kind, for me, but also for other researchers conducting similar studies.

Not only did the participation rates suffer as a result of this collective suspicion of the research and its potential personal impacts, but this context also influenced and

changed the design of the research methods. Due to the high degree of mobility across and within provincial and international borders, a mapping component was initially proposed that drew on workers' commuting patterns, job descriptions, and income, designed to document the changing sources of labour supply, spatial distribution of different kinds of employment within the industry, and the spatial flows of income from capture and aquaculture processing associated with changing labour force compositions and work quality. While I intended to get workers to graph out on a map their commuting distances, this became problematic for anonymity reasons because I was not naming communities, and this method was thus determined to be inappropriate under the circumstances. However, what developed instead was a focus on the changing corporate structure and financialization of the industry and sectors, something that was not part of the original design.

### **3.6 Summary of Methods and Methodology**

This chapter provided an overview of both the methodological considerations that shaped the methods used here, as well as the methods that I chose to use to investigate the historical trajectory of the seafood processing labour force in a specific region in NB. I detailed how the exploratory case study, which included semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and participant observation, was designed, executed, and analyzed from a qualitative framework. The benefits of using more than one method in this case study included attention to power dynamics in shaping narratives. Thus, documents provided the larger and more overarching narratives on labour shortages in seafood processing and on the use of the TFWP; the case-study approach, including participant

observation and interviews, provided more contextual narratives of those associated with the seafood processing industry in a specific region where labour shortages, high unemployment, and the TFWP coexist. The foundational work of investigating this concurrence begins with the historical case study method used in Chapter 4, in order to establish a temporal comparison, thus providing more context for, and detailed explanations of, how this coexistence developed. Interview data are used in the remaining chapters (apart from the conclusion), and the results of document analysis of corporate capital concentration are the focal point of chapters 5 and 6.

## **4 A Historical Tale of Cheap Wage Labour and (Im)mobility**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Beginning with the colonization of the territory that was to become NB, this chapter traces the growth of the capture seafood processing industry from its inception in the late 18th century up to 1980. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a historical understanding of how the community, the industry, the workforce, the resource on which the seafood processing industry relies, and the sociopolitical and economic systems that framed all of the aforementioned came into being and changed over time, in order to understand more clearly the current regional context. Data for this chapter is drawn from secondary literature on the history of NB, including the limited literature on the NB capture seafood processing industry, the historical literature on the BC seafood processing industry, and interview data. Critical analysis of these historical sources foregrounds the colonial history, high mobility, control of citizenship, and seasonal rhythm of work and life that were features at the outset of the capture seafood processing industry, as well as the creation of the company-town model for recruiting and managing labour, and its subsequent demise.

Viewing the history of this region and industry through a feminist political economic lens draws out the connections among the community, the workforce (including work/life rhythms and mobility), the company (which would have been tied to the economic and business models of the day), and the marine resources (and their rhythms) on which the industry depended. Complex social constructions of place,

gender, race, ethnicity, and class in these regions and workplaces during the last century act as historical scaffolding for current labour force composition, relations, and controversies. Within this region and industry in NB, which I call Oceanside (the pseudonym for the area of my study from this point on), there is a historical connection between mobile and immobilized cheap labour and capitalist modes of production, as is evident from the very inception of industrialization, through boom and bust cycles in the industry, in continual changes in labour sources in order to acquire cheap(er) labour, and in unrelenting appetites for increases to both production and the accumulation of capital gains indicative of the changing world economy.

The chapter begins with an overview of how the colonial history of the province of NB shaped socio-ecological systems throughout the early history of the fishing industry in the 18th to 20th centuries as it grew in economic significance, including the larger patterns of mobility that were occurring, and the early work/life rhythms in the area. Next, the chapter describes the development of the lobster canning industry, and subsequently the herring canning industry, and their impacts on the region. This section explores the creation of a company town that set the rhythm of work/life, as well as created characteristic and enduring relations among the workforce, the company, and the community. Labour force composition and the dynamics in the canneries at this time are discussed. Last, the chapter discusses the era of Keynesian welfare-state policies starting in the 1940s, including a detailed discussion on Unemployment Insurance, later Employment Insurance (EI), which included income assistance. Related to social policies brought in during the Keynesian era was growing union – and thus worker –

strength, which was unfolding in BC. There was an unsuccessful attempt at unionization in NB, the failure of which may have been a result of lessons learned by management from the labour organizing successes in BC. Keynesian welfare state policies helped further to entrench a seasonal work/life rhythm in canneries that later began to cause friction with the rhythms of neoliberal rationalization and the development of corporate capitalism within the industry.

## **4.2 The Settlement of a Province and the Founding of an Industry**

The seafood processing industry, which started out as canneries, developed shortly after Confederation in Canada, amid considerable migration in and out of the newly formed province of NB. The industrial-capital process taking shape in Canada was strongly connected to the natural resource base, in forestry, mining, and, to a smaller extent, the fishery. This reliance on natural resources meant early production was manifestly tied to the seasonal rhythms of the harvesting of the resource, which in the case of the fishery were constrained not only by weather patterns, but also by fish migration patterns. As well, with the advent of industrial-labour forms of organization and formal education systems, families began to separate their work and life rhythms. This section explores the beginning of both the seafood industry and the province of NB within these contexts.

### ***4.2.1 Settling a Province***

The earliest known inhabitants of what is now called New Brunswick were the *Wolastoqiyik*, also called Maliseet (or Malecite), *Peskotomuhkat* or Passamaquoddy, and *Miigmaq* (*Miigmao*) or Mi'kmaq or Mi'gmaq (also *Micmac*, *L'nu*, *Mi'kmaw* or *Mi'gmaw*) peoples. These peoples, along with other First Nations living in Atlantic

Canada, had been almost completely annihilated by the end of the 17th century, mostly by diseases brought over by Europeans who had arrived earlier in the 17th century (Lotze and Milewski 2004). Those First Nations who remained were pushed out of areas yielding valuable resources, such as the prime fishing and farming areas near Saint John and surrounding regions. Therefore, unlike in British Columbia, First Nations in NB did not provide a cheap and available labour force at the start of the industry 200 years later in the 19th century.

In the 1600s, European fish harvesters established base camps in the area during the summer to fish for cod (Lotze and Milewski 2004). It was also at that time that small European settlements began to spring up after France laid claim to a large territory, aptly named New France, ranging from what is now Virginia in the United States to Hudson's Bay in central Canada (Munro 1855). During the 1600s and much of the early 1700s, both France and England engaged in conflict over the territory that is now New Brunswick. In the 17th century, Europeans arrived in substantial numbers (Soucoup, 2009). In 1713, the French surrendered Nova Scotia to the British, which at that time also included the area now considered New Brunswick, but the English did not evict the French settlers (whose descendants are now called Acadians) from the area until 1755, with very few Acadians returning to the area in the time since (Craven 2014). Between 1750 and 1783, small numbers of immigrants, referred to as Pre-Loyalists, mainly from New England, the British Isles, Scotland, Ireland, and to a small extent Germany, arrived in the region. The end of the American Revolution in 1783 brought a massive wave of in-migration, as close to 14,000 American Loyalists (that is, loyal to Britain)

were among the first non-Aboriginal peoples to settle permanently in my study area, as well as in the surrounding areas (Soucoup 2009). The following year, in September 1784, New Brunswick split from Nova Scotia to become its own colony, and then later joined Confederation with Canada on July 1, 1867, becoming the province of New Brunswick.

It was not just new peoples who immigrated to New Brunswick, but also new ways of thinking and working. Industrialization and the expansion of capitalist economic ideologies began to reshape how people worked. Factory jobs in North America were initiated by the importation of British businesses caused by excess capital in Britain at the turn of the 20th century, driving a need for new markets to maintain growth and profit. These factories also instituted a new form of labour that Gaventa (1980) argues was both glorified and mass-produced. Global-industrial work rhythms elevated the meaningfulness of wage labour over unpaid activities. Ideological understandings of work, shaped through capital temporality, also included cultural norms dictating power differentials between men's and women's work, with women's work undervalued or, in the case of work in the home, devalued altogether (Nash and Fernandez-Kelly 1985). Thus work rhythms and life rhythms do not necessarily always conflict or require balancing (see Syring 2009), but with capitalist spatial temporality, work and life rhythms are not in harmony (Lefebvre 2004). As capital grew in its importance in industrialized Europe and its colonies, employment-related migration flows occurred, including, as discussed next, in New Brunswick.

#### ***4.2.2 Historical Migration in and out of New Brunswick***

Migration rates in and out of the Atlantic provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island between 1860 and 1900 were high (Acheson 1964; Thornton 1985). Triggered in part by the post-Confederation deindustrialization of the region, outmigration from the Maritime region can be classified, Alan Brookes (1976) contends, into three categories across social strata and cultural divisions during this period.

[T]he Maritimes were a highly fragmented region during the years 1860-1900 and striking differences in ethnic origin, religion, age, and occupation existed among the inhabitants of the three provinces. Yet the exodus cut across these divisions and selected its following - albeit far from equally - from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds. The changing nature of the migration during the period can be separated into three categories, embracing both sexes, and all ages, religions, and ethnicities. The first group to leave consisted of young, single males and females whose departures were often on a seasonal or temporary basis. The intermediary category was of newlyweds and young couples with no or very few children who began married life by deciding to set up home in a locality with better prospects for advancement. The third group embraced older people, over thirty-five years of age, who migrated either as whole families or as elderly parents given an offer to join successful offspring elsewhere. (Brookes 1976, 37)

Brookes (1976) notes that family ties constructed migration patterns that started with those more easily made mobile by lack of social obligation to children or spouses, then those with spouses but without children, then those with children, and then the elderly. NB's outmigration peaked in the 1870s, during which forty to fifty percent of males between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine left the area. Nova Scotia's and Prince Edward Island's outmigrations peaked a decade later. Migration patterns during this time generally featured migrants arriving from Europe, and for the most part, leaving for the US, while some migrants went to western Canada (Thornton 1985). Thus, while there was a significant amount of immigration during this period, lack of employment prospects meant that migrants, for the most part, moved on to other areas, where work

opportunities existed.

Those who stayed in NB worked primarily in seasonally based industries such as agriculture or forestry. Yet despite the general outmigration occurring in the province at large in the 19th century, the population of the geographic area of my study was expanding. This population expansion, which began after 1875, was mostly due to the local transition from agriculture and lumber subsistence livelihoods to seasonal fishing livelihoods, instigated by industrialization in the seafood industry. For example, the population of this area peaked at 26,000 in 1881, and then stabilized at approximately 24,000 (Lotze and Milewski 2004).

#### ***4.2.3 Overview of the NB Seafood Industry***

During the first one hundred years of predominantly Loyalist settlement, fishing was not a significant industry, and was largely overshadowed by agriculture and forestry (Wynn 1981). First Nations peoples had lived off marine resources before Europeans settled the area. A European fishing industry was well established before permanent large-scale European settlement occurred. In fact, increasing European settlement and the colonization of Canada were aided by the economic prosperity of the fishing industry (Whitcomb 2010). After American Loyalist and pre-loyalist Americans, British immigrants made up the third-largest group of settlers in the area. The majority of American Loyalists were associated with wealth, commerce, and a relatively pampered settlement experience, but there were also those who settled in more remote and rugged areas whose lives did not share such opulence.

Pre-Loyalist Americans dominated the small-scale lumber and fishing

operations, and those from Britain were largely military and civil servants who had been provided free land along the US/Canada border (Acheson 1964). In a description of the industries in NB at this time, Fisher (1825) describes the agriculture and shipbuilding industries and their connections to trade with Europe and the West Indies in the following way:

From this period the Province slowly improved in Agriculture, Ship Building, and the exportation of Masts, Spars, &c. to Great Britain, and Fish, Staves, Shingles, Hoop Poles, and sawed Lumber to the West-Indies. Receiving in return coarse Woollens and other articles from England; Rum, Sugar, Molasses, and other produce from the West-Indies (11).

Whaling was the major fishery in NB (centred in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of Fundy) during the 17th and 18th centuries. Salmon, groundfish, herring, and lobster fisheries developed after the whaling industry, and were followed by fisheries for soft-shelled clams, scallops, periwinkles, seaweed, shrimp, sea urchins, and crab (Lotze and Milewski 2004). Of the approximately 5,000 inhabitants residing up and down the coast in 1875, only 243 were fishermen (Acheson 1964). While herring was not the dominant species fished, it would become vital to the region and fishery in the future.

Herring, harvested via the traditional weir fishery in NB, was for decades a relatively lucrative, stable fishery with annual landings approximating 25000t (Stephenson 1999). Many of these fishermen were indebted to the dominant processing plant for the duration of their careers (Marshall 2009). Seining was originally introduced as a complement to the weir fishery, starting in the 1930s with seining vessels owned by harvesters. This allowed easier collection of young herring

for processing into canned and salted sardines. Technological changes and the development of markets for roe and meal led to the seine fishery dominating the NB herring fishery by the 1960s, along with significant increases in landings and warnings of stock decline (Stephenson 1993). The lucrative nature of the seine fishery initially allowed seiners to gain more independence from the processing companies.

With large-scale industrial development, the fisheries began to be reorganized through capital accumulation-driven developments; these, unfortunately, overexploited the fish stock life-cycle rhythm, disrupting its capacity to flourish, and, ultimately, its ability to maintain its population. During the latter half of the 20th century, shrimp, lobster, crab, and herring fisheries were the most lucrative fisheries in New Brunswick as measured by both value and export volumes (NB 2007) – but up until that time, the rhythms of the ocean and the seafood dictated the rhythms of those who harvested them for subsistence.

#### **4.3 Setting the Rhythm of Work within a Newly Industrializing Seafood Industry**

It was within the initial pioneer subsistence lifestyle that seasonal work patterns were established. These included summer farming and fishing and winter lumbering. Seasonal work rhythms continue in this area to this day. Thus, core rhythms of work and life balance speak to the long-standing establishment of a mode of living that was intricately tied to the rhythm of the natural resources and the seasons. As corporate capitalism developed within the seafood industry, especially within the herring fishery and processing plants, rhythms of work also shifted.

### ***4.3.1 Seafood Processing (1875-1900)***

The first attempt at canning sardines occurred around the 1870s in Eastport, Maine, and was undertaken by George Burnham after observing the French canning pilchards (a sardine, similar to herring). Almost a decade later, he was able to attempt it on a larger scale, and while his business ultimately was unsuccessful, the process was proven viable ( [REDACTED] Newspaper 1973<sup>8</sup>). In 1885, the first sardine canning company started in NB. As Acheson describes, this was a key marker in the transition from farming and lumber to fish:

This plant, secure in the eastern part of the county from American competition, rapidly developed into one of the largest plants of its kind in the world. It marked the turning point in the transition of the [area] from farming to lumbering to fishing as the way of life of the majority of the population. The 243 mainland fishermen in 1871 had tripled twenty years later at a time when the population of (other communities) had declined (1964, 264).

When the industry started to prosper in the latter part of the 19th century, it was in spite of awareness of continual depletion of pollock, herring, cod, and haddock stocks between 1826 and 1850 (Lotze and Milewski 2004).

The lobster industry was popular in Maine starting in 1871, as well as in the Atlantic provinces, due to the discovery of preservation through canning. The dominant capture processing plant in Oceanside at the time had originally been established as a lobster cannery in 1894 (Acheson 1964), but also sold canned fish, fruits, and vegetables from the storefront (Oocities 2001). The popularity of canning lobster did not last long,

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<sup>8</sup> Ethics approval for this research required the masking of community and company names in order to protect the vulnerable workforce. Some sources used in this chapter identify this information. In these cases, the source has been blacked out in the bibliography or in-text citation, as relevant. If a scholar is interested in these sources for research purposes that person can contact me, and I will send the full citation.

which might explain the focus on the herring industry (Billings 2014; New Brunswick Archives; Godin 2002). The herring company to which I will henceforth refer as NB Cannery began expanding its operations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, building an entire town around the main plant. In order to start the canning production, machinists were brought over from Norway and Sweden, and a labeling operation was also started to print labels for the cans. The lumber mill in the area provided enough lumber for the company to build houses that were used to encourage plant workers to settle there. Aside from houses with subsidized rent, the company owned the land, stores (post office, general store), the mill, a hotel, a baseball field, three churches, and a dairy, vegetable, and beef farm, and provided all the public services (Oocities 2001). Those who settled in this company town to work in the processing plant became the first of many generations of families, including children, who worked their whole lives at the plant. In the town, all aspects of workers' lives, including their spatial and temporal rhythms and their economic and their social lives, were tightly interwoven with the fabric of the company's need for cheap, immobilized labour that was responsive to the seasons and changing needs of the company.

#### ***4.3.2 The Roots of Cheap Labour***

Cheap labour is a prerequisite for capital accumulation (Harvey 2010). In particular, children, women, and racialized men and women have contributed their labour to the seafood processing industry at low cost.

Child labour, or the regular employment of children under the age of fifteen (Barman 2011), was a common practice at this time in Canadian as well as American

industry (Hurl 1988). Children were paid the lowest wages of all workers, and due to their small size and hands were considered to be ideal workers for factories. They could perform relatively unskilled labour in many industries, aided by machinery that could do the heavy work (Hurl 1988). Documentation exists of children working in seafood processing plants in Oceanside (Manning 2010), including the reminiscences of one woman, born in 1880, who worked in the NB cannery from the time she was ten. She explained, “I stood on a box because I couldn’t reach the table, that was in vacation time, I didn’t work all the time, but poor [name of owner of NB Cannery], you know, he didn’t care how old you were – someone to cut the head off a fish” (Wilbur and Wentworth 1987, 25). Working “in vacation time” recalls the fact that schools became provincially funded in most provinces, including New Brunswick, by 1873, although attending school was not made compulsory in NB until 1905, and then only for children up to age fourteen in urban areas, and twelve in rural ones (Oreopoulos 2005). Therefore, while some children only worked when they were not in school, as seems to be the case with the woman cited above, many children left school at an early age to work on farms or in factories (Oreopoulos 2005).<sup>9</sup> Research has also shown that as children exited the workforce due to changing social norms and the increasing significance of school, women began to fill in the vacancies left behind (Par 1982; Kealey 1973). Thus, while children offered the cheapest labour, women and new

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9. In order not to distract from the period, I am mentioning this in a footnote: While there is no official documentation of how long children worked in seafood processing plants, many workers I interviewed spoke of the significance of the processing plants to youth summer employment, with stories of starting to work in the plants as young as fourteen. When this started to wane, I do not know, but interview data in chapter 7 shows that a lack of young workers was a concern in 2012.

migrants were also usually cheap, willing to work anywhere, and easily replaceable (Muszynski 1996).

In the NB canneries, women, men, and children were recruited directly from the surrounding area. Many were newly immigrated from Scotland, Ireland, and the United States, and settled in the community around the fish plant. These workers lived a life akin to indentured servitude because their plant's company-town model meant that their employer controlled every aspect of their lives (Oocities 2001). There is inadequate archival material identifying these original workers, but an article in a regional newspaper in 1946 features an interview with a group of women who were brought over from Maine to the plant in its early days for the sole purpose of teaching other women how to pack the fish. The article describes how women were paid twelve cents per case for packing the fish, while men were paid \$1.25 to \$1.50 per day (Fundy Fisherman 1946). While it is not stated in the article, research on seafood processing in other jurisdictions during the same period permits us to surmise that the difference in pay was due to a gender division of labour in the plant, most likely assigning women to packing, and charging men with maintenance and heavy lifting, and also possibly with making the cans (see Muszynski, 1995; and Newell 1989 for a historical overview of BC's seafood processing industry).

#### ***4.3.3 The Company Town***

Leading up to the 1950s, herring plants in the surrounding area were springing up and being bought out by the NB Cannery almost as quickly as they appeared, demonstrating that in its earlier stages, the success of the fish processing industry in NB brought

growth and the eventual domination of one company, initiating a new corporate capital rhythm that linked company consolidation and dominance with communities and its workforce. Five plants had existed in 1900, but none was as successful as the original plant, NB Cannery. Much of the impetus for entering the herring market came from the strong herring stocks during this period, which seemed so abundant that overfishing them was not considered possible. The number of plants expanded and decreased via bankruptcies, buyouts, mergers, and start-ups, with NB Cannery eventually buying out the majority of competitors by the middle of the 20th century. One previous owner described this era as bad for the sardine plants, explaining, “Markets, it’s always markets. We had too many factories. In 1948, we had about fifty factories – just too many. You always had to borrow. No one had enough money not to go to the banks, the same as now, they want it and they kept the pressure on” (Wilbur and Wentworth 1986). The booming herring industry and its overabundance of plants (almost fifty) belie the fact that one company, NB cannery, owned most the plants.

NB Cannery developed into a company town, through the boom of the industry and the energy of new owners, who expanded both the company and community from the 1920s to the 1960s, eventually dominating the fishery in Oceanside. NB Cannery was originally a family business, and incorporated in 1923. It maintained the name, even though only one family member stayed on as president, for the following four years, until that man’s death in 1927 (Oocities 2001). In 1925, under the new ownership, NB Cannery began buying up the remaining twenty companies in the region. By 1950, it was the only company remaining, with multiple plants located throughout the

surrounding area ( [REDACTED] Courier 1973). The management group that had originally incorporated NB Cannery continued to run it. In an archival online book on the history of the community, the writer depicts the takeover of the company as an extension of the intensely paternal relationship this company had with its workers:

Although the company controlled the lives of the people, there were no feelings of resentment by the people toward the powerful [owners]. The era of the [company name] in [name of town] has come to a close. The residents felt at a loss when the transition was made. They had always been treated fairly and knew they were secure under the arm of [name of owner]. When World War I approached, they were free to serve their country without fear of losing their homes or worrying about the welfare of their families. If [company name] ever had any ill effects on the community, it was that life was made too easy for them in [name of town]. Some tried living in the outside world but could not cope with it and, in most cases, returned home to the security of [company name]. [Name of owner] had paved the way for the [last name of new owner] Era in [name of town] and offered them a successful financial future (Oocities 2001).

A successful future was indeed enjoyed by the new ownership. NB Cannery prospered through the 1930s, 40s and 50s, and this was reflected in the development of the community during that time. In 1928, electric lights and running water were installed in the community, and a fishmeal plant was built. The original sawmill burnt down in 1920 and was rebuilt in 1929. In 1934, the school, originally built in 1912, burnt down, instigating the creation of a fire department. In addition, at this time, a theatre that could seat 300 people was built, as well as a restaurant, a hospital, a garage, and new houses (Oocities 2001).

While this town was somewhat segregated from the outside world due to the company-town model, the surrounding areas began to see the immigration of workers from urban areas in the 1930s, due in part to the popularity of the automobile, and in

part to the Depression (Acheson 1964). Susan, a fishplant worker at NB Cannery, stated that for the workers at NB Cannery in the 1930s, the effects of the Depression were almost nil, as the plant continued to operate and provide all services for the town and its workers. This company-town model was also described positively by many of the people I interviewed who had been children in the 1940s and 1950s, and then later worked in the plant. Diane describes the familial quality to the company town, due in part to the overarching role the company played in all aspects of the workers' lives:

***Diane:** They built the hospital, the schools, the fire department. Where I live, it was what they called the farm where they produced the milk and everything for when they started the store here, it was very much a company town. Downstairs of this building use to be the bowling alley, and the theatre. So it was a tight-knit little community, when people died the company dug the graves. It was very much a family.*

Although these are positive reminiscences, Susan, Mandy, and Peter all refer to negative aspects of the company-town model. Susan, whose parents worked in the plant in the 1940s, who grew up in the company town in the 1950s and 60s, and who then raised her own children there in the 1980s, points out that employment provided workers with the a good life in the town, but if they quit, they could not remain there. The ramifications of this, as Susan notes, were evident, as people very rarely left the town, or thus their jobs.

Susan reflects on this:

***Susan:** [T]he company, when it started, everything was owned by the company, the stores, the bowling alley, the theatre, the houses that you lived in. You rented from them, and if you stopped working for them, you would lose your rent, they would kick you out of the harbour, that's the way it was. But it was a way of life that we never questioned. We knew, we had kids, and you know. And that was mostly my mother's time. . . . And a lot of things, there used to be a bowling alley and a theatre, it was strange. Cause, thinking back we had it made but were disconnected from the rest of the world. Like we never went to [closest city], like in my mother's time, they just stayed in*

*that area, and worked and just lived.*

Mandy's reflections point to the high level of control that the company had over its workforce, but she also points to the way in which the company-town model was used to instigate control over the work/life rhythm of the workers through the company's use of the "big steam whistle," which regulated workers' shifts, as well as infiltrated all aspects of social life and organization (i.e., it was also used to signal chimney fires). The company town bred a kind of learned helplessness or dependence, which Mandy characterizes as follows:

***Mandy:** Okay, let's talk about the traditional fishery, and the [company name] umbrella that everyone found so much comfort under. Because the company looked after the town before incorporation and that yet, I mean the company, you rented your house from the company, all the houses were rentals, no one owned their house, the company sent out a snow plough to plough the houses to make sure everyone could get to work. In [name of town] for example they had a big steam whistle, and one blast would mean that the packers were working, and then, like there was, two blasts that would mean another department was working, but if it blasts in the middle of the night, it would mean there was a chimney fire, and everybody would come running. . . . Back forty or fifty years ago, like I said the company was really dominant. You worked at [company name], you spent your money in [company name] stores and you didn't talk about a union or anything else. And if you didn't do these things, then you didn't work here, you know what I mean? So [company owner's name] had the right idea, we'll pay the people but we will make them spend the money back on our products. And the current home of [aquaculture company]'s head office was at one time a mecca of different stores owned by [company name], like individual stores and even a car dealership, everything was, you know, you made your money at [company name], but you spent your money at [company name]. If you didn't, you got the hell out and someone else did. So it's been a really big turn for our community, it's been a really big learning experience for our community, uh, to realize that security blanket is not there.*

Further supporting Susan's and Mandy's criticism of the control the company had over workers' lives through the company's ownership of the town, Peter describes how the community police force was used by the company to ensure debts were paid: "They had

a company store, when you were done working you go to school and you would get a cheque, then credit, and if you didn't pay before you started working, they got their own police force, the police force would just come to your house at twelve o'clock at night and kick the door down and they would take it out of your pay.” Other participants noted that many workers lost other assets, such as land owned outside of the community, by the company seizing it as a form of debt repayment. Another area of control was elections. Interviewees describing the history of their town also mentioned the political control the company historically held. For example, Peter explained that the company owners “were Liberal, right? If one Conservative vote showed up they found out who it was and they fired you.”

These workers and community members describe the pervasiveness of the company town and how it structured and reified all aspects of workers’ lives (including their work/life rhythms) and deaths. They also talked about the nature of the paternalistic relationship and how it could immobilize workers within the community and the workplace. Workers were taken care of, but not without costly social consequences for personal independence and community development. While this model offered a stable and secure workplace and community structure and services, it also increased workers’ vulnerability, as the repercussions of leaving the company’s employ were steep: not only did it mean loss of a job, but also loss of home and community.

#### ***4.3.4 The Company Town and UI***

I was unable to uncover when employees in the plants first were able to access UI/EI. As UI was first introduced in 1940 in Canada with the Unemployment Insurance

Act (Porter 1993), it would have been available for much of the plant's life, but the program was implemented at a snail's pace, with much government oversight and adjustment (Warriner and Peach 2007). It arose from the Keynesian welfare state model, which characterized unemployment problems as remediable with national-scale macroeconomic regulation and social policies (DeRoche 2001; Peck 2002). UI/EI is a federal program that includes mechanisms designed to address provincial and regional differences in rates and types of unemployment. When the program began, eligibility was based on 180 days of employment in the previous two years, but only about forty-two percent of all paid workers in Canada were eligible (Levesque 1989). Indicative of the liberal political economic, as well as social ideologies of the time, women and seasonal workers were among those who faced exemptions or restrictions around access to and duration of the program.

Women entering the job market during the planning and implementation of the UI Act were subjected to greater social pressures either to exit the labour market or to take lower-paid and lower-skilled jobs that usually did not fall into the standard employment model, and were usually more precarious than jobs available to men (Vosko 2006a). Influenced by end of World War II, widespread societal concern that men would return from war without job opportunities vigorously renewed narratives that implied women, especially married women, belonged at home, not at work, and implicitly influenced the original UI Act (Porter 1993; Pierson 1990). Porter (1993), summarizing Pierson, explains:

[The] UI contribution and benefit structure of the 1940 Act reproduced sexually-unequal wage hierarchies; women's employment patterns and

childcare responsibilities meant they were disadvantaged both in their ability to qualify and in the length of time they were able to draw benefits; women were virtually excluded from the higher levels of the administrative structure, and the prevailing ideology of the “family wage,” which assumed that the male was the head of the household and that married women would be supported by their husbands, led to the inclusion of dependent’s allowances in the UI benefit structure. . . . [I]n the framing of the legislation, women’s principal access to benefits was to be indirectly through the dependent’s allowances (113).

Amendments to the Act in 1950 put explicit restrictions on married women’s ability to apply for UI, thereby working to increase women’s economic dependence on their husbands and streaming them into lower-wage/-skills jobs. This amendment derived from the contention that married women were both making fraudulent claims as well as overtaxing the system, to the point where the programs funds were being drained (Porter 1993). A comment made by the Deputy Minister of Labour, A. MacNamara, in 1950 was a telling example of this belief, when he professed, “I suppose that there are quite a number of girls who have no intention of working after they get married who will be glad to have Unemployment Insurance Benefits to pay the installment of the Washing Machine – or is it a new Television set?” (Porter 1993, 122). While this is now considered highly derogatory, at the time statements such as these would not have been out of the ordinary. The statement also highlights the rise of consumerism, which went hand-in-hand with the growing industrial capitalism of the time, as increased capital accumulation was tied to increased production, and thus consumption was needed to maintain the capitalist rhythm of perpetual growth (Harvey 2010).

Not everyone held these views, and there was some opposition to the passing of the amendment regarding married women. A large part of the reason Porter (1993) feels

that it passed was a lack of support from unions for working women at the time, in combination with the commonly held belief that married women were draining the funds. Critical is the lack of awareness of the employment situations these women faced at the time. This was most likely an important factor in the higher rates of claims for women that Porter noted. The fact that women at the time were not only having difficulty finding work, but the work they were getting was in sectors that were non-standard and had high rates of layoffs, surely played a role in women applying for UI (Porter 1993). In addition, labour economist Svanhuit Jose finds that women's contribution to UI in the early 1950s was such that the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) union thought it was overfunded:

[F]ar from being a drain on the UI Fund, women as a whole, in fact were subsidizing it! Nor is there any indication that the UI Fund was actually being drained. The balance in the Fund rose steadily from the time it was started to a peak of \$927 million in December 1956. It reached such a high point that the CCL suggested it was over-funded and that the benefit rate consequently should be increased (Porter 1993, 141; emphasis in original).

The married women's amendment was removed in 1957, as it could no longer be justified with the large number of married women in the workforce; thus, reality no longer mirrored the socially constructed narrative that married women should not work. The case of married women and the evolution of Unemployment Insurance policy in Canada demonstrates, first, how larger social narratives and ideologies influence policies, essentially infusing them with the social norms of the day, and second, how so-called fact-based arguments can be both nonfactual and/or fabricated, as was the fear that women, and married women in particular, were abusing the system and draining it of funds, while in fact the opposite was true.

Women were working in seafood processing at NB Cannery at this time, as shown above, and would have been engaging in seasonal work indicative of the seasonal nature of the fishery, and of the fish stocks at the time. Seasonal workers were exempt in the original 1940 UI Act due to the specific occupations that were excluded (fishing, forestry, and agriculture), but also due to the “ratio rule” which limited the amount of compensation for which one was eligible for each time one applied (Dingledine 1981; Kahn and Ridell 2010). The system was not conducive to supporting workers who were laid off annually and then rehired, matching the natural rhythm of their work, as was typical for seafood processing workers, who were seasonally employed.

The commission in charge of the Unemployment Insurance Act made amendments to the 1940 act in 1950 that allowed seasonal workers to apply as long as they were unemployed in the “on” season, or if they could prove they were not just seasonal workers, but were employed in other work that was considered insurable. However, this was not applicable to seafood processing workers, as they were considered food packers, who remained exempt from coverage due to the perceived complexity of trying to insure this type of work.

When the legislation was revised again in 1955, a new Seasonal Benefits program was created. This new program was in actuality a renaming of the previous Supplementary Benefit system that had been added in the 1950 amendment, and that had been implemented as a short-term measure during a period of high unemployment leading up to the Korean War for those workers who had exhausted their regular benefits (Dingledine 1981; Schrank 1998). Not applied until 1956, the new Seasonal Benefits

allowed recipients to receive benefits during the winter months (Kuhn and Ridell 2010). This program was expanded again in 1957, due to concern over high unemployment rates for seasonal workers. The history of UI and EI use by seafood processing workers in the region of my study is hard to discern, but there is some evidence that workers were initially restricted by their employer from using the program (McFarland 1980).

#### **4.4 The Company-Town Model: From Industrialization to Neoliberalism**

For the remaining decades of the 20th century, many aspects of life continued relatively unchanged, with the company town managing workers' daily work and lives, with the exception of a small French population of workers, who lived just out of town and provided a reserve army of labour:

The village prospered throughout the forties and fifties but it remained a company town, for [company name] owned the land, streets, power and a majority of the houses. At the same time, the company paid the operating costs for the elementary school, the hospital, as well as the police and fire departments, [and] the residents paid no municipal taxes; however, there was also no privately owned commercial facilities, for almost everything was company-owned. There were only a few exceptions; one being a number of houses along the French Village Road, in the area of village's Acadian-French speaking community (Oocities 2001).

The population in this period remained relatively static, as the children of the original settlers went to work in the plant, and then their children did as well.

Immigration from the United States and Nova Scotia occurred on occasion, but the population became increasingly homogenous, with an estimated ninety-six percent of the population by 1942 being of British origin (Acheson 1964). The remaining four percent was composed of the small French Canadian population mentioned above. Here we see how an area built by labour mobility evolved into a community with a strong

sense of place, and associated with intergenerational labour immobility.

The NB seafood processing industry, through the company-town structure, had the ability to control its labour force tightly up until the end of World War II, when shifting ideologies regarding the roles of the state and the employer, as well as regarding the rights of workers, emerged and were reflected in unionization attempts and the introduction of Unemployment Insurance. The company-town model in Oceanside became further entrenched in the late 1950s, but this model began to disintegrate due to a combination of forces, including decreasing fish stocks.

The head of NB Cannery in the early 1960s raised a red flag about herring stocks, arguing that herring were being pulled in younger and younger. He argued at a conference with both federal and provincial fisheries delegates present that in 1962 “31.4 percent of the herring were first year spawners, a figure that had jumped to 55.3 percent in 1964” (Wilbur and Wentworth 1986, 91). His concern over the potential signs of overfishing was well-founded, as the stock collapsed six years later.<sup>10</sup>

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10. The collapse of the herring fishery has been argued to be due to overfishing caused by the introduction of purse seiners, which were able to catch much more fish for much longer periods of time due to their ability to weather rougher water and weather conditions due to their larger size (Wilbur and Wentworth 1986). While purse seiners were able to catch more fish, however, they delivered a lower-quality product. Wentworth explains:

The weir fishery produces a good quantity of top quality fish for the sardine plants. That is one of its greatest assets because when the weirs are in fishing order and the herring are here, there is usually a good supply of fish set up in the pounds that will last for up to a week or even two. They are good clean fish with no feed and they make a top quality sardine. This is about the only method that will produce this type of product, particularly in the period from May until November. The herring caught off shore by the purse seiners are often feeds and present a processing problem because they tend to break up easily. This is one of the things that's kept the weir fishery in business (93).

Likewise, the New Brunswick Fish Packers Association, in a brief to the task force, states, “History indicates that herring stocks . . . have been shown to be very unpredictable. They seem to run in cycles, showing strong year-classes for years, then, without too much warning, drastically decreasing to extremely low levels. This, of course, creates havoc with capacity, both harvesting and processing” (Kirby 1982, 331).

Declining herring stocks were not the only impetus behind the decline in the company-town model. New ownership and growing neoliberal ideologies in the 1970s also contributed to its decline and related rhythmic shifts in workers' lives.

It has been argued that company towns go through four stages of development: 1) construction of the community; 2) recruitment of citizens; 3) a period of transition in which the company sells off its community assets; and 4) stabilizing of the workforce and community (McFarland 1980, 103). In the 1960s, Oceanside entered into the third phase of its development. This happened after the third owners bought the company. While it would still be another forty years before drastic changes occurred, this marked the start of the town and its workers coming out from under the protective and controlling umbrella of the company.

NB Cannery was sold in 1967. This time it was sold to one of Canada's largest conglomerates (both at the time and currently), which owned it until 2004. This company, Canadian Grocer, also owned a major processing facility in British Columbia (secretly purchased in 1962, the sale not made public until 1966 – which raises questions regarding back-room deals) (Lee 1983). This company also held the rights to a popular brand of seafood, and was in the process of acquiring a majority of the processing plants in BC. A British company at the time (although now it is Canadian), Canadian Grocer owned 150 firms in multiple countries, controlling thirty percent of Canada's food industry in the 1970s (Lee 1983). Thus, in the 1960s and 1970s, Canadian Grocer not only owned two of the largest processing facilities on each coast, and their associated

fishing vessels, it also owned two of the most iconic and popular seafood brands. As well, it also owned many other businesses and their associated brands around the world.

While the transition away from a company-town model was gradual, the company still maintained its significance in the community and surrounding area, and not just as the major employer. The ramifications of this company takeover for workers was negligible due to the fact that while the company was no longer locally owned, the workers and management, as well as many of the company's board members, including the president, vice-president and treasurer, were retained from the previous ownership, and most resided in the area (██████████ 1973). What changed significantly was the role of the company in all other aspects of workers' lives. Susan and Mandy describe these changes in ownership and the loss of the way things had always been:

***Susan:** About forty years ago, when I got married, a few years after that they started selling the houses. That's when, I guess business was tight, so they started selling the homes, because of course they're starting to run down and need upkeep and all that, and they sold the homes to the employees. . . . Okay, things started, you know they started selling homes, and things like that, and they sold the theatre; they sold it to a church group. My church actually, and now it's the [church name] and its well kept up now. But it's sad to see it go, like, and there was a bowling alley across the road, just behind the [name of a restaurant] and that is all gone. Everything that was fun for the employees is gone. 'Cause you know, they had to look at it like a business, and they were getting bigger, so yeah. Yeah, so, um so after they start selling the homes, it was fairly, you know, I brought up my children, five children, my husband and I, and it was basically the same, you worked and . . . but we owned our homes, we paid for them.*

***Mandy:** So um, what was I . . . yeah, so once they started selling, then they stopped ploughing [snow for] people and then they stopped doing all these little extra things that they used to do, and they got rid of the company trucks, a lot of the bosses had company trucks but you would see them up at the malls in [name of a city], they used them as personal vehicles, It globalized the community if you will. We are relatively unique here, or we were. And I suppose the piece de resistance was electing a female, non-[company name]*

*mayor.*

Mandy's comments substantiate what Susan describes, but she also places emphasis on the changing political dynamics within the community, such as the election of a mayor who was not only female but also who had no ties to the NB Cannery. Susan's comment, "They had to look at it like a business," speaks to the evolving role of capitalist relations under emerging neoliberal ideologies as they affected a growing corporate capital model in the industry. NB Cannery would have always been run like a business, but what had changed was the businesses model itself, and its relationship and commitment to the community.

The new owners of NB Cannery focused on growth and profit within the growing globalized corporate capital business environment, and did not prioritize the need to maintain an (im)mobilized labour force, and thus the company's ties to the employees also lost priority within a larger corporate network. "Fun" for the employees was thus no longer a pivotal concern, just as the company no longer wanted to control the community through ownership of its public services.

#### ***4.4.1 Attempts at Unionization of NB Cannery***

Keynesian welfare-state policies, including Unemployment Insurance (UI), were associated with an era of strong unionization in Canada. The strong corporate control over workers in NB was evident in workers' inability to organize a union, despite the favorable social political environment for unionization in other provinces in Canada at the time. Under the thumb of company control, the plant in NB never unionized. There was one attempt, in the early 1970s, but it met with unmitigated failure, as the company

meted out severe punishments to those workers who attempted to organize. The NB cannery, in response to the attempt, created an “Employee Committee” still in existence today. These kinds of committees are very limited in what they can achieve. As argued by Joan McFarland:

Since the Committee is not certified, there is no meaningful way that it could call a strike. This makes its role in negotiations only nominal. Furthermore, the Committee does not draw workers together since only the representatives meet and there is no machinery for all of the workers ever to meet together. In addition, there are always company representatives at the meetings – usually the local boss and the personnel manager – and there are no dues for the worker; the company pays all of the Committee's expenses (1980, 102).

The unionizing efforts were defeated because the company argued successfully before the Labour Relations Board that, in actuality, all members of the community were employees of the company, not just the processing workers, and thus the support was not sufficient because it did not represent the majority of the community population, only the majority of those working at the processing plant. McFarland (1980) describes the fallout of this attempt to unionize:

The treatment of the employees who became involved in the union organizing of 1970–71 was particularly harsh. A committee of 45 to 50 people had been established to undertake the task, which had to be carried out in complete secrecy. Following the decision by the Industrial Relations Board not to grant certification, the company fired all of the members of the secret committee and evicted them from the town. This incident seems to have left an indelible impression on the remaining employees. (103)

Not only were the workers still unmistakably fearful of labour organizing even eight years after the failed attempt at unionization, when McFarland conducted her research, but the negative connotations associated with attempting to unionize were still palpable when I was there some thirty-four years later. McFarland suggested that the strong

actions taken by the owners who bought the plant in 1967 to snuff out any chance of a union were linked to this company's past union experience in its BC plant, which, at the time, had a strong and active union. This is an important point, as the unionization of the seafood processing plants in BC was highly successful, and afforded these workers the highest wages in their industry in Canada (Stainsby 1996).

The unionization of fish plants in BC followed fish harvesters' efforts after World War II, and included seafood processing labourers. The processing workforce did not become organized in the same way themselves until the early seventies due to the hurdles of overcoming "exploitation stemming from their conditions as cheap wage labour as well as the patriarchal legacy of oppression of women and the colonial heritage of racism against 'non-white' groups" (Muszynski 1996, 220). The fact that they became the highest-paid seafood processing workers in Canada was, as Muszynski (1996) argues, not without consequences. After a strike in 1980, the processing sector was restructured, putting most of the ownership into the hands of Canadian Grocer, the company that also owned the plant in NB. This has been identified as a tactic used by corporations as a way to redistribute work to areas where there is little unionization (Massey and Miles 1984). The following three years saw a loss of 1,000 jobs, and the Atlantic Canada fisheries then became the company's focus, where, coincidentally or not, labour was much cheaper and unorganized. Lee (1983) identifies this corporate strategy, stating:

The fish-processing industry also serves as an example of the manipulation of a predominantly seasonally employed workforce by a company. There is no job security, and the company stipulates the amount of labour required in a season. Admittedly this in part reflects the seasonal nature of the industry and

the vagaries of the salmon runs. However, it appears to have been used to the maximum advantage by [company name]. The Northern region is characterized by relatively poor employment opportunities and many people are forced to take seasonal employment. This inevitably places a company in an advantageous position during the bargaining over wages and conditions (116).

Seasonal work and company control over workers' shifts, as well as the number of days/hours they accrue have significant implications for workers' ability to access Unemployment (in the past) and now Employment Insurance (EI).

#### **4.5 Unemployment Insurance as a Strategy for Managerial Control**

The use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) as a strategy for managerial control and construction of (im)mobilized cheap wage labour in the community has occurred at least since the 1980s. UI, renamed Employment Insurance (EI) in 1996, is a significant part of seafood processing workers' economic survival strategies in NB, NL, and BC (Stainsby 1994). Workers may earn what seems like a significant amount of money per shift, but due to the seasonal nature of their work, their overall annual incomes are quite low. As a result, this social benefit developed a unique history in NB, and in some sectors, nationally. For the purposes of this chapter, analysis focuses on the UI policies and their application to processing workers from 1970 to 1980.

The 1970s saw extensive changes to the Unemployment Insurance program, including expansion of seasonal benefits coverage so that socioeconomic conditions were now being factored in based on the significance of seasonality and of low incomes in this industry. Seasonal employment, as established previously, was already the established work pattern for seafood processing workers. UI went through another

overhaul in 1972, expanding the way benefits were calculated to reduce the number of work weeks required for eligibility and expanding the number of weeks covered, especially in high unemployment areas. Thus workers employed seasonally were now more likely to be guaranteed to qualify, or to get their hours. Also lifted were the restrictions on repeated use, so workers applying year after year were not being penalized. This overhaul opened up UI to many labourers who were previously ineligible, and made it much easier for those seasonally employed to become eligible (Dingledine 1981).

The extent of the use of Unemployment Insurance as a means of income supplement among the seafood processing workers in the area of my study in NB is unclear. In the seventies, as contended by McFarland, some of those employed in the area were prevented by their employers from using the program:

[I]f an individual tries to collect unemployment insurance benefits, the Unemployment Insurance Commission office calls up the personnel manager who will give assurances that work is available at the plant and the person's benefits are cut off. Through these policies, the message is effectively conveyed that every able-bodied person must work (McFarland 1980, 104).

The evolution of the UI program as it morphed throughout the dominant Keynesian era in Canada provided an economic stability to workers who aligned their work rhythms with the life cycle of the fish stocks, the fishing industry, and their own processing industry. Later changes including the conversion of the program from UI to EI that were embedded within larger neoliberal ideological changes seem to show how businesses that once depended on social benefits as a way to ensure a reserve labour force for peak production times were also able to use the social program as a powerful tool used by

managers to control workers, as well as to help push them out of the industry.

While I was doing fieldwork in the community, EI was a part of the yearly rhythm of the work and life of the people I interviewed who worked in the capture plants, and had been the case for some time. In fact, proposed changes to EI in 2012 were a significant concern at the time of the study, not just for the workers, but for business owners and key informants who understood the significance of this program to the community at large.

#### **4.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provides the historical framework for understanding how labour markets were constructed between the late 19th century and 1980 by a dominant company in the herring industry located in the study area, and the consequences of these mechanisms for different groups of workers and their families. In-migration was key to the seafood processing industry's ability to access and maintain cheap labour during the 19th century and parts of the 20th century. This company constructed a segmented labour market for its industrial herring processing industry, featuring international migrants, and created a company town where highly mobilized workers became immobilized over time, with all aspects of their lives, including their citizenship status in the community, tied to their employment. The blurry boundary between citizen and worker meant that the company maintained control over workers through threat of, or actual, banishment. As Giorgio Agamben (1998) argues, banishment relates to how society constructs rights to sovereignty; thus, the company-town model provides company power not just over the workforce, but over citizenship. The collapsing of the citizen/worker identity affects

power dynamics within specific places by creating spaces in which the interrelationships among mobility, immobility, race (or, in this case, ethnicity), gender, and cheap or complacent wage labour coexist. Power over and through wage labour, and thus capital rhythms, is also evident. It was the changing economic and political ideological landscape in Canada roughly between 1970 and 2012, alongside changes to the resource that spurred the deconstruction of the company town. Seafood processing labour history in NB was shaped by the regional nuances of that place (in- and out-migration, local labour, unionization, industry and natural resources, etc.), but was also tied to larger global economic and migration trends at the time.

What also was established in the industry was the seasonal rhythm of work/life balance necessitated by the seasonal aspect of the herring fishery. As corporations entered the middle of the 20th century, their size and product bases grew to unforeseen proportions, but their abilities and knowledge of how to control labour grew, too. What also began at this time, and continues at an amplified pace today, is the buying and selling of large corporations. The relationship shift between labour and capital within the seafood processing industry in NB from the late 18th century company-town model to more global, corporate capital models can be understood through the larger sociopolitical economic shifts that were occurring as Keynesian welfare state ideologies began to be retracted, replaced by new neoliberal ones that reconstructed capital labour's rhythmic relationships, or created new misalignments that reorganized labour's relationship with community and resource. The next chapter looks at the how the capture seafood industry developed within the neoliberal context until 2014, and how this has

shaped the industry's growth and relationship to labour. The focus of this coming chapter is how corporate capitalism in the fishing industry became interwoven with corporate capital financialization processes that were linked to other food-processing sectors.

## 5 Financialized Corporate Capital(ism), Part One: The Capture Fishery 1980–2014

*Neoliberalism, whether embraced by choice or necessity, is changing the relationships among state, industry, and communities.*  
—Young and Matthews 2010

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter<sup>11</sup> demonstrated how the NB Cannery used immigration and a company town business model that linked citizenship rights with expected employee behaviour to produce a tightly controlled, (im)mobilized, and segmented seafood processing labour force. As Canadian political economic ideologies shifted to a Keynesian welfare state and then to a more neoliberal one, corporations began to restructure their relationship with the labour force, widening their labour force pool to include interprovincial and then international migrant workers in order to align with new, financially induced profit-accumulation tactics. This chapter picks up the development of NB Cannery and the wider region from 1980 to 2012 and places it within the larger neoliberal sociopolitical context of corporate consolidation, mergers, and ownership changes that also included narratives of economically stringent times and intense competition, as well as, in the case of NB Cannery, the increased value of the company itself. Document analysis of press releases, newspaper articles, company websites, and interview data are used to map out and trace the at-times convoluted history of ownership changes at NB Cannery in the study region; the development of

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11. This chapter draws on material published in Knott and Neis 2017.

the aquaculture industry will be looked at in more depth in chapter 6.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight who owned the local capture seafood processing plants in 2012 – both of which employed migrant workers through the TFWP at that time – to understand labour force changes and how and why ownership has changed so frequently since the 1980s, and who is benefiting from this. Is it workers? Communities? The resource? Companies? Understanding the changes to the ownership and company structures is important for understanding labour force changes discussed in the following chapters. This chapter traces the growth of corporate capitalism through shifting ownership changes, horizontal and vertical mergers, and consolidations within NB Cannery.

First, how the capture industries in my area of study were being restructured from the 1990s onward within a larger environment of provincial and federal rationalization of capture fisheries is detailed. NB Cannery during this time was downsized and sold multiple times, each time redefining the company's role in the community and to its workforce. A key part of this discussion includes the introduction of Private Equity firms as a new type of corporate capital and the impact of financialization processes within this neoliberal global economic context. The second half of the chapter first investigates quantitative aspects of labour shortages in the industry, and specifically in Oceanside, associated with regional population decline. It concludes with the ways in which this has affected the community of Oceanside and surrounding communities.

## **5.2 Corporate Capital and Financialization in the Capture Fishery**

Corporate capitalism has been increasingly turning away from production and towards finance in its quest for profit generation through capital- and technology-intensive methods that are increasingly based in financial speculation (Longo and Clausen 2011). Longo and Clausen (2011) argue that the evolution of corporate capitalism represents a “crisis of commodity,” and this mode echoes similar motifs of corporate capitalism and financialization. For example, financialization shifts the “value” of capital accumulation away from production values and towards the value gained from financial processes. This is connected to the larger shift from production-dominated to service-dominated economies (Carroll 2004). Financialization has coincided with the popularity of neoliberal ideology in political/economic strategizing, and thus is influencing how policy is informed, and how and what governments support.

Differing manifestations of corporate capitalism within the capture industry may be tied to the very different products of capture fisheries, which are less controllable, and more reliant on the “natural” rhythms of seafood stocks, than those of aquaculture. These are stocks that are not only less predictable, but in decline.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the herring seine fishery in the study area became one of the first fisheries in Canada to be regulated using a total allowable catch (TAC), limited entry, and an individual quota (IQ) and subsequently an (individual transferable quota) ITQ management system (Stephenson 1993, 1999). This opened the door to increased financialization of access to the herring TAC. Prior to this, the main

role played by finance in dictating access was through its relationship to the capital needed to buy fishing vessels and gear. Limited entry and ITQs opened up opportunities for investment and speculation around rights to fish and future catches. In the first instance, licenses were allocated at a nominal cost and quota was allocated for free to operating seiners. Individual seine licenses with attached ITQs are now worth as much as a million dollars each, and are thus beyond the financial reach of most seiners (but not most major multinational corporations). As a result, by 2016, 79.5 percent of the licenses were controlled by three processing companies (Stephenson, July 2016, personal communication). The increased value of the licences has been directly tied to the speculated future value of the catch. Similar to “hot” mortgage markets, this overvalued licence price creates a limited buyers’ market, resulting in high company ownership of the licences – again.

The original ITQ herring fisheries were not monitored for dumping and other practices. As a result, quota-busting (fishing more than the quota allocation) and over-fishing were serious problems in the sector, as they generally are in unmonitored ITQ fisheries (Copes 1986). This changed when more stringent approaches to management were introduced in the mid-1990s (Stephenson 1999), but would have contributed to the volatility of the sector. The effects of this mismanagement on quotas and catches, combined with the opportunities for vertical integration by companies involved in harvesting offered by the ITQ system, resulted in decreased competition and autonomy for smaller purse seine operators who had to sell to these plants to survive.

The few vertically integrated processing companies that now own the seine

quotas and plant infrastructure have also undergone changes as a consequence of financialization. These changes have contributed to the vulnerability of workers and local communities to employment uncertainty and deteriorating working conditions, as outlined in the next two chapters. The analysis below documents key changes in ownership and control of NB Cannery, illustrating that increasingly, the value that these companies offer, specifically in the case of the NB Cannery, is their financial value instead of their production value, which is an integral shift for financialization, and, within its processes, private equity development.

### ***5.2.1 Understanding Private Equity***

Private equity firms do not purchase companies in order to run them, as their main objective is turning a profit and paying back the group of investors (usually large banks) who finance the takeovers (Peker 2010). Harvey (2010) describes this process similarly, explaining that private equity firms “typically take over public firms, reorganize them, asset strip them and lay off workers before selling them back into the public domain at a hefty profit” (50). Private equity firms target companies that hold assets that are not being maximized in terms of value. Klimek and Bjørkhaug (2015) argue that food industries typically fit the characteristics of private equity target companies because they are usually mature and underperforming, but with stable cash flows to finance the debt of buyouts, and they are also not as capital-intensive as other industries (10). Buyouts focus on mature and underperforming companies that operate in markets with favorable industry trends. Industries with stable cash flows serve to finance the debt associated with buyouts. They borrow money and buy out

shareholders, then divest companies, sell off subsidiaries, and restructure labour forces and employment relations/contracts, all with the intent to maximize profits. They do not hold the companies for any length of time; three to seven years is the average (Daniel 2012; Klimek and Bjørkhaug 2015).

Since the late 1990s, private equity (PE) firms have increasingly been used to restructure organizations, thereby transforming corporate power (Wright et al. 2009; Thornton et al. 2011; Carroll 2007). The literature on private equity both supports and contests that this corporate style is harmful to workers and communities. Gospel et al. (2011) explain that private equity business models have been described as either “financial engineering whereby returns are mainly secured via leverage” or “involving restructuring of underperforming firms to enhance performance” (278). Therefore, private equity either refinances a company or restructures it. Both versions have ramifications for labour, the most obvious being the loss of jobs through asset stripping and/or asset swapping, but also through increased pressure on management to provide results (usually through incentive contracts) that not only increase stress for management, but can also lead to decisions by management that may negatively affect workers (Gospel et al. 2011; Wright et al. 2009). A counterargument is that the increase in value that private equity firms provide for companies leads to both improved employment security and long-term employment growth. In most cases in which employment has been negatively affected, it is seen as inevitable, as, it is argued, this has usually occurred in sectors in which companies were struggling financially anyway (Gospel et al. 2011). Much of the literature concludes that the effects on labour

depend on multiple contextual factors, such as the type of takeover, the economic prosperity of the company at takeover, and whether current management is retained (Gospel et al. 2011; Goergen et al. 2011; Wright et al. 2009). Goergen et al. (2011) find that companies acquired by private equity buyouts do not significantly increase their productivity through jobs cuts, and they highlight the pertinence of location and social context for favourable performance factors:

[T]here is a need to conceptualize skills and human capabilities not only on an individual, but on a collective dimension, specific to a particular organizational setting, rather than the lump sum of what individuals may be worth on the external labor market. . . . [O]ur findings underline the importance of understanding managers . . . as operating in particular social settings, making subjective choices based on their specific knowledge and experiences of past events (274).

They thus assert that management's local knowledge may actually provide better productivity results due to the intricate employee/manager relationship that is lost in cases in which new management is brought into acquired subsidiary firms.

### **5.3 The Consolidation, Merger, and Financialization of NB Cannery**

The trail of ownership of NB Cannery begins with the second sale of the plant in 1967 to the large grocery store conglomerate (Canadian Grocer), which also owned a large processing plant in BC (BC Cannery). In 1997, Canadian Grocer merged ownership of the BC plant (BC Cannery) with the NB Cannery plant, along with both their brand labels. Two years later, the BC brand (BC Seafood Brand) was made a separate legal entity, and, along with the BC plant (BC Cannery), was sold to a large multinational American seafood company (American Seafood). American Seafood, which was

owned by an even larger food company, was sold in 2000 to the second-largest US food conglomerate (American Food Co.), which, during the year prior to this acquisition, was closing dozens of plants and firing workers in an effort to save \$600 million a year (Casamar Crow Nest 2000).

**Table 5.1 Capture Seafood Company Key**

<b>Capture Seafood Company Key</b>	
Cannery	NB herring cannery
Canadian Grocer	Large Canadian grocery store conglomerate
BC Cannery	BC Processing Plant that dominated the industry in BC (bought by Canadian Grocer in the 1960s)
BC Brand	Brand name of BC canned fish product
American Seafood	Large multinational American seafood company (owns BC Cannery and BC Seafood Brand, merges with the NB Cannery plant) This company name is used interchangeably with the NB Cannery plant company name in press releases.
American Food Co.	Was the second-largest US food company in 2000. Buys American Seafood in 2000 then sells it to a private equity firm in 2003.

Canadian Grocer attempted to sell NB Cannery in 2001. At that time, 1,000 people worked for NB Cannery (CBC 2001). The president of the company is quoted in a CBC article discussing the plant’s potential sale; where the writer suggests that “he doesn’t think people should worry about the company’s future. In fact, he thinks the new owners will be lucky. ‘They’ve got extremely good brands, leading market shares, first class physical assets, and a talented and motivated workforce’, he says” (CBC 2001). The plant did not sell, and instead, went to an Initial Public Offering (IPO), which is the first step in a company becoming public, and usually occurs when a

company is growing. NB Cannery purchased various assets and related businesses from Canadian Grocer, and became an independent Income Fund, which is a limited-purpose trust established under the laws of Ontario (Atuna 2004). Essentially, a limited-purpose trust restricts the company to its performance functions only.

American Food Co. sold American Seafood to a private equity firm in 2003 to increase NB Cannery's market value. This marked the first time NB Cannery was absorbed by a private equity firm. In 2004, NB Cannery acquired, via a \$385 million US merger transaction, American Seafood. In a *Canada NewsWire* news release, the management structure of the newly formed private equity firm was described thus:

The combined business will have a strong, experienced management team comprised of existing senior management at both companies. [Name], President and CEO of [American company], will be the CEO of the combined entity. The CEO of [NB Cannery], [name], will become EVP Sardine Operations and Procurement. Operating headquarters will be maintained in both Canada and the United States. The senior management team will have a significant ownership interest in the combined businesses (Canada NewsWire Feb. 11, 2004).

The merging of these multiple businesses made the company the largest branded seafood company in North America. This also meant that there were now multiple food companies owned by the large American company, due to its expansion to the shelf-stable meat business the following year. Also in 2005, two subsidiaries of NB Cannery were sold off – the can-making company and the aquaculture company (including farm sites, hatcheries, and feed company). American Seafood closed its factory in Athens, Alabama and moved it to Augusta, Georgia. NB Cannery closed the last two additional plants, one in NB and one in Maine (the Maine plant was jointly purchased in 2012 by the same conglomerate that owns the lobster company in NB and another lobster

**Table 5.2 NB Cannery Company Timeline**

<b>NB Herring Company Time Line 1967–2010</b>	
<b>1967</b>	<b>Canadian Grocer</b> buys the NB Cannery plant
<b>1997</b>	<b>Canadian Grocer</b> merges BC plant with NB Cannery plant along with both their brands.
<b>1999</b>	<b>BC Seafood Brand</b> becomes separate legal entity and is sold to <b>American Seafood</b> along with <b>BC Cannery</b> .
	<b>American Food Co.</b> closes dozens of processing plants and lays off workers in the US.
<b>2000</b>	<b>American Seafood</b> is sold to <b>American Food Co.</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>Canadian Grocer</b> tries to sell <b>NB Cannery</b> (the NB herring company), but is unsuccessful. <b>NB Cannery</b> becomes an Income Fund and is now an independent company.
<b>2003</b>	<b>American Food Co.</b> sells <b>American Seafood</b> to private equity firm
<b>2004</b>	<b>NB Cannery</b> acquires <b>American Seafood</b> and the two companies are merged, with the names used interchangeably. Becomes the largest branded seafood company in North America.
<b>2005</b>	<b>American Seafood/NB Cannery</b> sells two of its subsidiaries: the can-making company and the aquaculture company in NB. Closes plants in NB and Maine.
	<b>American Seafood/NB Cannery</b> buys assets of a shelf-stable meat business, relocates company from Alabama to Georgia.
<b>2008</b>	<b>American Seafood/NB Cannery</b> sells off shelf-stable meat company.
	<b>American Seafood/NB Cannery</b> is bought by a private equity firm for the second time. The company is delisted from the TSE.
<b>2010</b>	NB lobster company co-purchases the plant in Maine previously owned by <b>NB Cannery</b> .
	<b>American Seafood/NB Cannery</b> is sold to an investment firm in England. NB Cannery begins \$12 million upgrade to the plant, of which \$3 million will be provided by the provincial government if the company retains the same number of employees.

thereby making them a privately owned company. In a press release, NB Cannery's company in the US, as stated earlier) (Canada News Wire 2005; Trotter 2012). The CEO of the company stated:

[T]hese moves represent the final major plant consolidation efforts to improve our competitive cost position. Given recent consumption decline in many of our categories due to higher raw material costs being passed through to consumers, it is more important than ever that we take every action necessary to reduce our costs to offset the impact of these commodity cost increases (Canada NewsWire May 20th, 2005).

In 2008, the shelf-stable meat subsidiary that American Seafood/NB Cannery bought in 2005 was sold, under the NB Cannery name, at the same time as the operating businesses of NB Cannery were bought again by the same private equity firm for \$600 million US, and delisted from the Toronto Stock Exchange (Canada NewsWire 2008), CEO stated, "I am very pleased to be partnering with [private equity name] for a second time. Their financial support and expertise should enable us to accelerate our growth plans for the business while allowing us to maintain our focus on providing the highest quality product while being the low-cost operator." To this, the senior partner of the private equity firm replied,

We're equally excited to partner with [name of CEO], and his high-quality management team again. We continue to believe there is significant growth for seafood and, in these uncertain economic times, canned seafood in particular. The company has a number of exciting growth initiatives which we believe will significantly improve its market-leading position in both the U.S. and Canada. We look forward to supporting [name of CEO] and the team as they expand their business further [REDACTED].

Of note here is that the company proceeded to fire the "high-quality" management team in the years following, hiring new management staff with no connections to the community. Part of the transaction in 2008 included support from three major

international banking and financial services holding companies, which loaned and/or invested \$535 million US. The senior partner of the private equity firm stated in a company press release:

In these difficult markets, working with the right capital partners is critical to successful transaction execution. [Name of the three financial companies] all demonstrated why they are leaders in the M&A financing market. In the midst of historic market volatility and credit liquidity, each of them brought us the fortitude, flexibility, and acumen required to effect a deal

[REDACTED]

While markets in 2008 were indeed highly volatile due to the collapse of the US stock market, the question is, volatile for whom? How do the larger and larger capital accumulations and corporate capital mergers, and their resulting highs and lows, affect local communities and workers? Harvey (2010) notes that it is during capital collapses of these kinds that greater accumulation of capital can occur. The consolidation of the NB Cannery, and then its takeover by and subsequent absorption into a larger conglomerate, seem to have only increased the worth of the company with each sale. This increased value, however, does not seem to have trickled down to workers in the form of secure, well-paid, stable employment.

In 2010, American Seafood / NB Cannery plant's assets and operations were sold to another private equity firm, a large consumer-focused investment firm based in England. This acquisition was valued at \$980 million US, and the CEO stated:

We are proud of the strong track record that we have achieved with [private equity name], and look forward to partnering with [British company], who bring a unique depth of experience investing in branded consumer businesses and the food sector, We believe the combination of our strong brands and proven strategy with [British company] consumer products expertise will support continued growth of our business and reinforce our market-leading positions in the US and Canada while we work to expand our global footprint.

We have a strong management team and a dedicated workforce – all of who contribute to our business success as well as our continued mission of improving our consumers’ quality of life by providing sustainable, nutritious, convenient and affordable seafood [REDACTED]

As well, in 2010, the NB government provided a \$3 million forgivable loan to NB Cannery, as part of a \$12 million project designed to, among other things, maintain 1,000 jobs in the area. Part of the project includes new machines meant to take the place of the traditional scissor packing, which the company argued would save both time and repetitive stress (CBC 2010). What is not mentioned in this story are the considerable savings in wages these machines offer the company, as scissor packers, who could formerly make up to \$200 a day, would now be getting paid minimum hourly wages on the machine, and the number of jobs would decline (see chapter 7). The vice-president of American Seafood/ NB Cannery, commenting on the loan in two different press releases, stated:

The assistance from the province means we can continue to produce a variety of high-quality canned seafood to compete in a global market. This modernization initiative will improve plant efficiencies and working conditions while helping us become more energy-efficient. *These changes will be good for business, for our employees and for our future* (New Brunswick 2010; emphasis added).

Like any business today we’re struggling with global economies and competitive positions of our business. Our business is subject to global trade and we compete with Morocco, Thailand, Peru, Namibia, and several other countries around the world where labour costs are exceptionally low (CBC 2010).

The loan, however, is only forgivable if the plant maintains its 1,000 jobs. The fisheries minister commented on the aid by stating that “In New Brunswick, our people are our greatest resource,” and that “[o]ur government is pleased to support one of our

province's oldest and most significant employers as it continues to improve this facility for its workers and to find innovative solutions to stay competitive in a dynamic world marketplace" (New Brunswick 2010). The premier of NB at the time, Shawn Graham, stated:

This company has been a vital part of our provincial economy since the 1890s, as we move toward a self-sufficient future, our plan for lower taxes and our strategic investments in key industries are helping companies to jump into new markets and diversify their product. [Company name] is an important example of how the revitalization of a traditional industry can carry a company successfully into the future (New Brunswick 2010).

The quote exemplifies how the focus is really on aiding company growth, not on workers or the community.

Eight months later, in late 2010, the workforce had dropped to 850, and two months after that, in 2011, the remaining workers agreed to a pay cut and reduction in the amount of overtime they could claim (AFIMAC Canada 2011). By 2012, when I was conducting interviews, the number of employees had dropped to 750. As explained by the manager:

***Interviewer:** Has the size, like the workforce, decreased or increased?*

***Carrie:** There has been a decrease in the last ten years, I mean when I first started here we had over 1,000, and so with the changes with [selling of the can-making company], and we had a plant in [name of island close by] that also was closed as well, so with those two changes that has brought our number down to about 750.*

Her explanation for the loss of 250 workers in two years is directly linked to the downsizing and selling-off of company assets typical of some private equity firm takeovers, and may have exempted them from officially breaking the terms of the loan and thus they would not have had to repay. Regardless, the result is the same – a loss

of work and increase in profit for investors.

In July 2014, a story published on a popular seafood industry website, [intrafish.com](http://intrafish.com), reported that another company had made a formal bid to buy American Seafood / NB Cannery, but the CEO stated that nothing could be confirmed or denied, and that the company was continuing to focus on growth through acquisitions. He said, “As we look at refinancing and longer-term strategic initiatives, nothing changes. It’s business as usual. Whether it’s small acquisitions to improve our frozen line in our processing facilities, we continue to expand our business.” The author goes on to say that the private equity firm was planning to auction the company in a bid to refinance, estimating a sale price of \$1.5 billion US. The incentive to refinance is said to arise out of , “increasing operational costs and the inability to pass them onto customers [which has made it] harder and harder to turn a profit . . . [w]ith annual earning before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) of around \$130 million (95.3 million pounds), and roughly \$1 billion (733 million pounds) in turnover” (Stilts 2014).

Despite these claims about difficulty turning a profit and global competition, the company was still attracting interest from even its biggest competitors (see figure 5.1 for a summative outline of the acquisitions, mergers, and stripped assets). Furthermore, each time the company has been sold, divested of assets and resold again, it has increased in value from \$385 million US in 2004 (\$482 million US in 2014 constant dollars) to almost a billion dollars in 2010 US (\$1.2 billion US in 2014 constant dollars). It did sell again in 2014 for over \$1.5 billion US, but the transaction was cancelled in 2015 after antitrust investigations by the United States Department of

Justice stalled the process. Thus, accounting for inflation, in ten years the total value of the company increased over a billion dollars. Yet the narrative of the industry is one of struggle and hardship. Workers have made concessions in the form of reduced shifts, loss of seniority and pay cuts as noted above (and discussed in further detail in the next chapter).

### ***5.3.1 Worker and Community Ramifications***

The latest takeover by the British private equity firm has affected the structure and organization of the company, with ramifications for workers and for the community. It has continued along this trajectory of profit-driven and capital-gains-motivated business decisions, which seem to have, over time, moved away from the connections to the community it created, and the workers towards whom it historically played a paternalistic role. For example, Marnie discusses the selling of the company's subsidiaries and the discontinuation or downgrading of "perks" the company used to offer in the community in the form of an employee fair on Labour Day, when workers were able to take the weekend off and enjoy time with their families, as well as show off their skills to the community during the packing contest.

*Marnie: Actually they owned the village when they started. Now this company is selling everything. Sold the main office we have had since forever, now we are thinking everything is going. When is [plant name] going to be done? Labour Day, that is a big issue with everyone. That was the employer's weekend; they always had carnival rides and stuff. Same company usually, same rides and stuff, it's a tradition, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. The Saturday they always had a packing contest, and they had people everywhere coming to watch it, and the fair and whatever, and the free day for all the kids on Saturday and they had a parade on Monday and fireworks. And they paid for fireworks every year, and they were spectacular. This year, excuse*

*my French, they didn't give a shit about what we wanted, and what we had, and they literally, the fair that they brought here, was maybe two years old could go on the rides. Because they said they booked it too late, which was. . . . They didn't have a packing contest, no parade, no fireworks, nothing. They wanted, here take this, this is what you get, go back to work. That's exactly what is was. There are so many people that are upset about it. It is not even what they did, but it's, that shows you. I am working my rear end off for you guys, and this is what, we get no appreciation. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Oh, we get free coffee, when? Once a month, I mean big whoop, oh we get a \$25.00 gift certificate from [the company] at Christmas.*

The result of these forms of large consolidation, in which large multinational companies buy up subsidiaries, is a shift in company priorities from communities and employment to profit margins. This shift is a natural one, because when a company is a subsidiary, the parent company can shed it at will if it is not bringing in satisfactory profits, as was seen in the BC seafood processing rationalization process (Lee 1983). Now, accountability and responsibility towards the current workforce are all but gone, along with ties to the community. The fact that the company maintains the same name within the community masks who owns the company, and also maintains the appearance of historic ties. Many workers I interviewed discussed the changes in the company under its new ownership. Diane discusses the loss of perks for employees and the increase in layoffs.

***Diane:** And here everybody knew everybody and looked out for everybody. Since the company's been sold, which would be the logical evolution to happen, it has become more the bottom line. You know it's a company from away, and they are interested in, is it profitable or do we go somewhere else? So a lot of that has been lost, and good people. I am sure they care for the business from a business sense, but all of that hands-on, you know, the Christmas parade, all that kind of stuff went by the wayside. That would be the biggest change that I have seen. It's very significant. The company is kind of wobbling. The company doesn't know who it is anymore. There is not a lot of definition and not a lot of trust that used to exist here and people kind of always, you know for the first*

*time in history, wonder what is going to happen to us. Nobody ever thought that before. People were spoiled, in a way. You could drop out of high school when you were fifteen, and you would always have a job. You do that now and where would you go? What would you do?*

Diane identifies the ramifications of the private equity takeovers for workers in terms of increased job insecurity, and a loss of good employees on top of the loss of the perks such as the Christmas parade.

Susan provides more detail on the loss of workers, some of whom had worked for the company for thirty years.

**Susan:** *They, um, the company that took over, really is, its [name of US company]. [City] is the main office. There has been a lot of cutbacks; managers have lost their jobs. Um, bosses, supervisors lost their jobs, lead hands, even some of the workers lost their jobs. And it was very painful. I know we had one of our plant managers, and, uh, that meeting when he sat in at this meeting they, [name of city] people come down and there was like, I don't know, thirty workers, and they were all in the room and they had to tell them they all lost their jobs. Men and women who were there thirty-plus years. And the manager, the plant manager was so upset. Because he had heart problems too, just got up and left. And, uh, so the doctor put him off on stress leave, and they never brought him back; they let him go too. And he didn't know, he thought that he was coming back too. And I mentioned it to my supervisor, and she said, oh no, they replaced him last week with someone else. It's very, very, stressful; there is no compassion from the company. I mean this is just, it's been so, it's just traumatic. It's like they took our soul.*

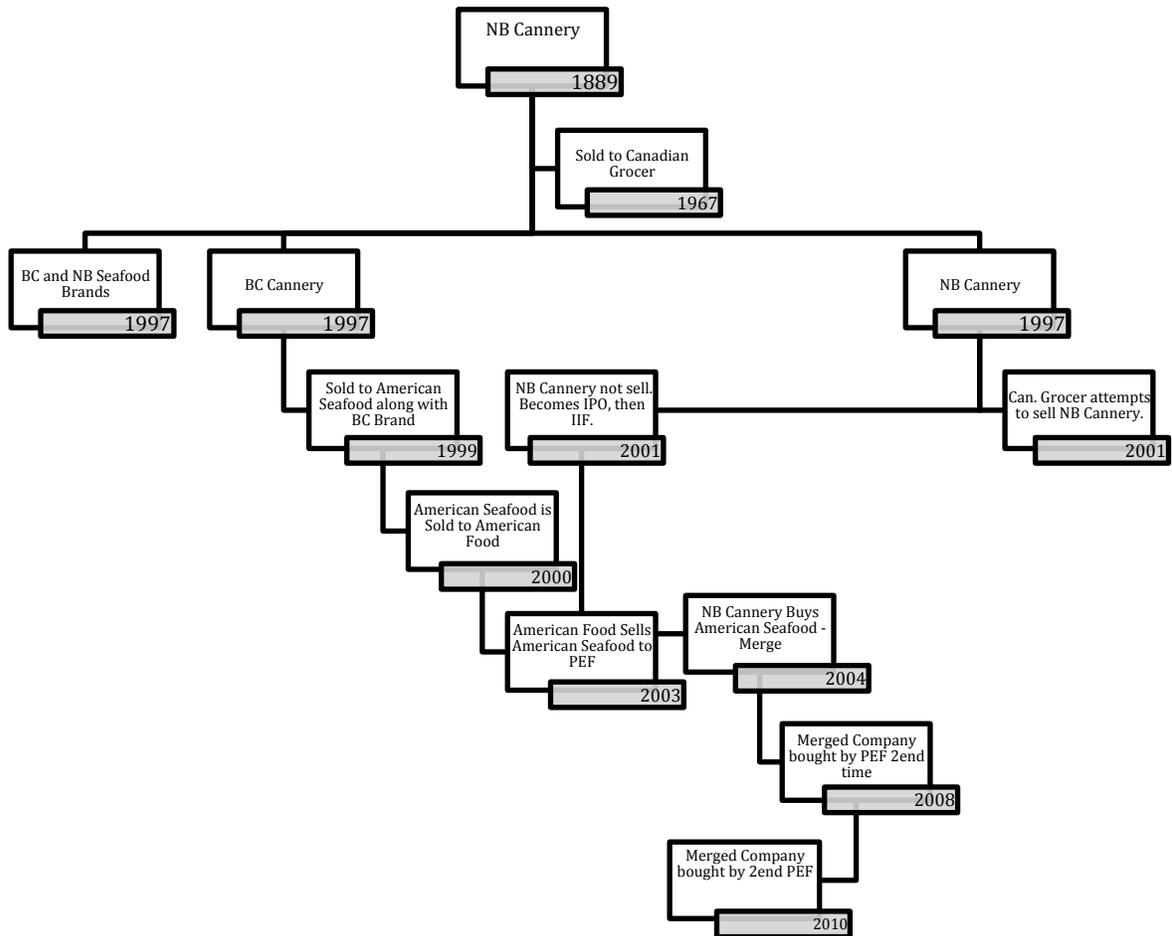
**Interviewer:** *And is it just with this last company that came in? [Yes] Ok, so it wasn't like that with the last few companies?*

**Susan:** *No, but this company is very competitive. They are looking at the European market. They can get fish packed overseas in China or wherever cheaper than we can pack, and they can have it sent over here and everything, and it would still be cheaper. So, on the business part of it, when you're a big giant like them I can see where they're coming from. But like everything else, it's always the worker, the small guy that gets the bullet.*

Renée sums up the general overall feeling I received from the workers: that the company just does not care about them anymore.

*Renée: They don't care. They don't care. That [company name], they really just don't care.*

**Figure 5.1 NB Cannery Ownership and Mergers 1889–2010**



These workers are speaking to the way labour force changes spurred on by financialization processes via private equity takeovers have had negative ramifications for long-term employees.

Employees who grew up working in the plants had certain expectations, as well as life rhythms, built around the way the company had been run in the past. The increasingly callous response from the company towards these Canadian workers speaks to the corporation creating a rhythm mismatch between long-standing worker expectations and new corporate capitalist ones. Below, Bree internalizes the ideological corporate capitalist narrative, that layoffs and loss of company engagement in the community are part of an inevitable business model that is just a part and parcel of how businesses are successful in today's economy.

***Bree:** I don't think it's a bad place to work. It's changing because it has to keep up with the rest of the world. And it's not like it used to be where they knew who you were. Now they don't know who you are, and they really don't care, but I don't think that is any different than any large company. Where they, it is different for us, it's not, it's the way of the world I think, but a lot of people don't see it that way. They say, "Oh, they don't care about us," you know, why should they? Well, you know what I mean. They are out to make money, which most of the people who are doing all the yapping, they would be the same way if they were running a company. It can't stay the same, it is, it's a balance thing. Things can't stay the same forever, the world changes. You got to keep up with it, you know, we have a lot of changes in everything.*

While Bree is forgiving of the newer, less-personal business model, she is also correct that it is becoming a standard business model – especially for corporations that have been taken over by private equity firms. Similar experiences have been cited in other case studies of companies that have been bought out by private equity firms (Goergen et al. 2011).

The connection between private equity acquisition and corporate responsibility to a community is an interesting dynamic in the context of the NB area where I conducted research. The strong historical ties of the herring industry to the community, its surrounding areas, and, to some extent, to the wider province, as exemplified above by the provincial premier's words, is severed when companies under the private equity framework begin to divest parts of the company, reduce their community role in supporting activities and events, and bring in new management. This is not to say that the company-town model was a better model, or not about profit. What I am arguing is that there is a significant shift within increasingly financially based capital flow that further removes focus from the production process, from the work and life rhythms employees grew up with. As resources such as herring become regulated through ITQs, and are bought up by the large multinational corporations that are able to afford them the result is increasing privatization of ocean spaces that are turned into financial assets worth speculative value, separate from their production value.

The changes to NB Cannery's relationship to the community have been so extensive that workers and community members are no longer able to keep track of who owns the company. It is sometimes referred as the US subsidiary (American Seafood), sometimes as one of the brands the company used to own, and sometimes there is recognition that it is owned by a British company – but they do not know the name with certainty, and sometimes, they just do not know who owns the company anymore. The following quotations from Kim, George, and Renée exemplify this confusion:

**Kim:** *I don't know how it works 'cause it [isn't owned] by [name of plant] anymore, it's a different company, it's kind of so-so right now. There is a lot of changes in that. There is even a rumour that they'll shut her down. So if that shut down, bye bye. That's it for us.*

**George:** *On the sardine side of things, I definitely am going to have to say I see a negative impact on the, that business, in my opinion, no, I think everyone would agree with me, I don't even think it's an opinion. That had that business kept with local ownership; things would have been better for that particular company. There has been significantly negative impact from that being a foreign-owned corporation, it's traded a few times, I can't even tell you who owns it now, I think it's out of California, perhaps it's an investment bank or something. But when it was under local ownership I think it was run better, and it was better for the local economy.*

**Renée:** *Oh, god, I went through three, when I first started it was [name of original plant], actually I think it was four, then it went to, the guy, big [name of grocery store company].*

**Interviewer:** *Oh, [Canadian Grocer]?*

**Renée:** *[Canadian Grocer], then it went to [company name], now, then it went to [original name], or [brand name], and now there is somebody else, [private equity name] I think, and I don't know if were [private equity name] when we left last June or not.*

For George, foreign ownership of the company has been negative for the community, and while he has a sense of who owns it, he is not sure other than that the ownership is foreign. Renée lists five different company names within this conversation, and while three are correct, the timeframe is off at one point, and she lists two companies that based on my historical reconstruction, never owned the plant. Thus, while there is a general awareness of when the plant ownership changed, and that it has indeed changed, the mergers, acquisitions, and consolidations, or selling off of parts of the company, make it hard for even those working for the company to keep track.

The mergers and consolidations of NB Cannery outlined in this chapter are the norm, not the exception, for the other plants in the study area. For example, the lobster

processing company, Lobster Plant, did not originate in the community, but relocated to the area as a subsidiary of a large American multinational vertically and horizontally integrated company. The parent company merged with another American seafood company in 2012. Their website states that this merger is in keeping with the parent company's goal of "vertical and horizontal integration . . . [and] a step in building a highly diversified seafood company with logistical efficiencies"

(████████████████████). "Logistical efficiencies," used to describe increasingly vertical and horizontal integration, seems like another term for easing the friction of capital flows, which can only be done through large multinational corporate acquisitions and mergers that seem to dominate the capture seafood companies in NB. This corporate capital model is also present in aquaculture. Multinational Fish Farm retained its name through buyouts and mergers, and subsumed multitudes of small companies within the corporation, thus resulting in it maintaining a much stronger identity within the community than would have been possible if ownership and corporate change was made more transparent.

#### **5.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has focused on how the evolution of corporate capital profit accumulation, and specifically private equity, is reshaping seafood processing industrial models in a way that truly affects workers and communities in NB. The changes to the corporate ownership structure of the capture seafood processing companies in Oceanside, and its ties to the trend of increasing reliance on financialization by global corporate capitalism – in this case through private equity – was achieved through mergers and

acquisitions. These relied on the selling-off of subsidiaries, reduction and restructuring of the labour force, and reduction of the level of community involvement. The ramifications of a corporate capital model that focuses on finance and speculation, not production, to drive profit include the remaking of corporate-worker relationships and corporate-community relations, but also the increasing privatization of the fishery, through TACs and ITQs. The changes that occurred to NB Cannery are similar to those that took place at the other capture plant, Lobster Plant, as well as in the aquaculture industry, and there might be a relationship among some of these companies' ownership changes. For example, the consolidation of the aquaculture industry within the community may have contributed to the interest of private equity companies in NB Cannery. The next chapter looks at how the introduction of aquaculture in the study region, while originally heralded as both a labour and environmental solution (at least for dwindling wild salmon stocks and herring stocks), was quickly restructured within the globalized economy, with one dominant company emerging.

## **6 Financialized Corporate Capital(ism), Part Two: Aquaculture 1980–2014**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The aquaculture industry in NB emerged in the 1980s, proceeded to propagate farms and companies rapidly in the 1990s, and underwent intensive corporate consolidation in the 2000s. The growth, boom, and consolidation in aquaculture testify to the promise this industry held for the community, the workforce, and the resource, yet the consequences have far outweighed the rewards. This chapter investigates, through document analysis of newspaper reports, news releases, and industry and government websites, as well as the academic literature on aquaculture, the neoliberal context in which aquaculture as an industry reached maturation. The chapter argues that neoliberalism and financialization have contributed to the domination of the aquaculture industry by large multinational corporations, which has led to a decrease in the amount and type of local employment created.

Governments, businesses, and communities have touted aquaculture's potential as an antidote to economic and social challenges in rural coastal communities. In many rural coastal communities in Canada, the decline in capture fish stocks, and the related job losses, plant closures, and changing patterns of employment mobility and labour forces mean communities are struggling. First, this chapter briefly provides an overview of the literature on aquaculture in Canada, and evaluates the promise of aquaculture as a community, economic, and ecological savior. Second, this chapter establishes the respective roles of provincial and federal governments in the flourishing and changing

ownership structure of aquaculture in NB, through funding initiatives and resource regulation, which acted as catalysts for the growth of corporate consolidation within NB, thus replicating the growth of the industry in BC, as well as globally. A comparison between NB and BC contextualizes how, in these distinct and disparate regions, the same level of corporate capital consolidation has been achieved, but in different ways; this comparison also furnishes data on the expanding industry and its social consequences, an under-studied line of inquiry in Canada.

## **6.2 Gaps in the Canadian Aquaculture Literature**

Most of the literature on the socioeconomic aspects of the aquaculture industry in Atlantic Canada uses a political economic framework (Calder 1997; Harvey and Milewski 2007; Marshall 2001; Marshall 2009; Milewski 2012; Phyne 1996). The work that addresses aquaculture in NB concentrates predominantly on private property rights within the fishery, and the tension (or lack thereof) between the development of intensive aquaculture and the traditional fisheries, usually the herring weir fishery or the lobster fishery (Chang et al. 2014; Harvey and Milewski 2007; Marshall 2001; Marshall 2009; Milewski 2012; Phyne 1996; Walters 2007; Wiber 2012). In particular, Phyne (1996) details the social, legal, and political differences between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick's aquaculture development that have led to the development of more intense conflict over aquaculture in Nova Scotia than in New Brunswick. By analyzing the development of aquaculture as an example of the privatization of the commons, Phyne (1996) is able to show that different levels of representation and different vetting processes influence the level of conflict or opposition. He concludes that it is the

aquaculture industry's ties to multinational capital that dissociate it from community members (and increase social stratification), and he therefore recommends participatory co-management arrangements for aquaculture communities.

While economic benefits to the community surface, to varying degrees, within the aquaculture literature, most of these works do not include seafood processing labour, and even the most recent overview of the aquaculture industry, by Chang et al. (2014), notes the significant role that aquaculture plays in employment in parts of NB. It does not, however, mention the controversy over labour shortage issues, or the need to bring in workers through the TFWP. Outlining the NB salmon aquaculture industry's growth, challenges (including conflicts and controversies), and achievements, Chang et al. (2014) find that initial attempts are being made to create an ecosystem-based management framework that includes an integrated coastal zone-management system. This participatory co-management arrangement is one plausible way to bridge the miscommunications at the local level that, if it included attention to work quality in seafood processing, could have an impact in terms of local labour.

Building on the work of Phyne (1996), Young and Matthews (2010), and Marshall (2001), I focus on how the aquaculture industry's coming-of-age within a neoliberal political economic context and ideology means it embraces the notions of privatization and enclosure that are indicative of capitalism in its post-production, or financialization phase. The global trajectory towards large multinational and finance-driven corporations is contributing to a shift in the relative power of the local labour forces and communities and minimizing the employment potential initially forecast.

There is no research as yet on financialization and/or private equity investment in the seafood processing and salmon aquaculture industries in Canada, aside from a publication that draws on research from this dissertation (Knott and Neis 2017). This new method of corporate capitalism, I argue, in the context of NB, is contributing to the increasing precariousness of seafood processing occupations within my study region, and aiding in the manufacturing of a labour shortage.

### **6.3 The Promise of Aquaculture: The Potential Socioecological Benefits**

Intensive salmon aquaculture's arrival on the fishing scene was not a smooth one, as aquaculture brought both hope and frustration to rural communities and to those people associated with the seafood industries. Many people and organizations that now oppose aquaculture saw it in a positive light in the beginning, principally because it was perceived as a way to allow failing capture seafood stocks to replenish. Aquaculture also brought potential economic benefits. For example, one of my key informant interviewees in NB says this:

*Jennifer: Well in the beginning, in the 1980s, we actually saw aquaculture, salmon aquaculture, as a way of taking pressure off of the capture stocks because it was, it provided a fresh product to the consumer, so decreasing the demand on the commercial fisheries. . . . So it became, more and more apparent, that the industry was not the panacea that we thought . . . in the 1980's, until we realized the error of our ways, and then switched to research to um, the [name of river] is an index river, I think is it the only North American Index river on the interaction between the wild and farmed salmon. Well it, that river went from an annual run of about 800 to, well you can count them on your figures and toes, sometimes just on your fingers.*

Thus, aquaculture brought the hope of reviving fisheries in the area, which is somewhat ironic given current concerns about the risks it poses to wild stocks. Meggs (1991)

describes this early hopeful mindset around the farming of fish in BC:

The farmers touted themselves as harbingers of a better future, in which environmentally friendly farms would produce jobs, exports and economic benefits coast wide while supporting and enhancing the commercial fishery. By selling in the off-season, the farmers said, they would sustain capture salmon prices and help existing processing plants to run year-round (Meggs 1991, in Robson 2006, 36).

As well, the fact that aquaculture was defined as a growth industry and thus infused with federal and provincial government development aid indicated that many already in the fishing industry realized aquaculture's ability to increase Canada's influence at the global level, which had been reduced due to the collapse of the groundfish stocks and growth of the fishing industry worldwide. As Young and Matthews (2010) find,

In the 1950's, Canada generated 5 percent of the world's seafood production. By 2000, however, this had fallen to less than one percent. This relative decline masks real growth: from 1950 to 2004, Canada's fish production increased 140 percent from all sources (fisheries and aquaculture), while world fish production rose an astounding 785 percent. Nevertheless, Canada's declining share of world fish production means that Canadian producers are again losing competitive advantage and the ability to influence pricing. Somewhat ironically, this loss of influence is one of the reasons often given by government officials to justify aquaculture expansion particularly since Canada's two most lucrative fisheries - Atlantic cod and Pacific salmon - have become shadows of their former selves (25-6).

Harvey (2010) explains capital growth and accumulation as a flow of capital that is in a process of constant accumulation through reinvestment. He states, "Capital is not a thing, but a process in which money is perpetually sent in search of more money" (40).

Harvey's (2010) understanding of capitalism is representative of the aquaculture industry's growth, consolidation, merging, and then continual horizontal and vertical growth outside of NB, which has transformed the company into a large multinational conglomerate.

### ***6.3.1 1980–2000 Blue Revolution in New Brunswick***

The area of my study in NB experienced consolidation of herring-capture plants at the same time finfish aquaculture was entering the picture in a big way. The development of the aquaculture industry, also referred to as the blue revolution (Neori et al. 2007), offered the community and its members what looked to be an extremely lucrative alternative to the capture fishing industry, and at an opportune moment. In the beginning, Atlantic salmon and rainbow trout were the two most common species raised. Rainbow trout were farmed mostly due to the lack of available salmon smolts, but other species were attempted, without success, such as arctic char, halibut, haddock, and cod (Chang et al. 2014). Farms (via leases) began sprouting up on a first-come, first-served basis, although priority for access to leases was initially given to commercial fishers (Chang et al. 2014; Phyne 1999).

The industry really took off after 1984, once salmon smolts became more readily available with the development of private hatcheries. These allowed faster expansion of farms due to easier access to smolts. This coincided with the development of available funding for start-ups in the industry through the New Brunswick Fisheries Development Board (Anderson 2007; Chang et al. 2014). One farm site was in existence in 1979, ten had been established in 1984, then ten more the next year, and by 1990, there were fifty. The value of this industry was also rapidly expanding, jumping from \$49,000 in 1979 to \$88,000,000 by 1991. The price for farmed salmon, however, did not follow the same upward trajectory, as it peaked in 1987 at \$14.00/kg and dropped to \$8.77/kg in 1990, rising only slightly to \$8.80 the following year (Phyne 1996, 76). It reached an all-time

low of \$3.20 US/kg in 2002 and then slowly increased to \$6.10 US/kg in 2012 (Chang et al. 2014). The variability in price, and its connection to the pricing of other countries such as the US, meant that viability for small companies was particularly challenging.

The industry, in its early growth stage, was composed of a significant number of small companies. There was a government limit of one salmon site (which could contain up to six cages) per company, thus fifty salmon farm sites in 1990 meant that there were almost as many companies, with forty-five producers active. Most of these were family-run operations (Phyne 1999; Liu et al. 2013). One of the first salmon farmers in NB, Sam, describes the initial stages of the industry and some of the many difficulties and growing pains associated with the aquaculture industry in NB in the early stages. He also outlines the standard operating procedures of aquaculture in the early days, with one company (usually family-owned and -operated) doing all aspects of the business:

***Sam:** This was on the side, so that I was leaving the house at 5:00, 5:30 in the morning to feed the fish, go to work, come back, feed fish, go home. . . . My partner also had a full-time job so we had to shuffle that, and then, as with any business, the key is to get numbers. Get your numbers up so that you get enough money coming in, and the problem then was that we couldn't get the number of fish to put in the water because there were no private hatcheries producing salmon smolts, so we had to go to the federal hatcheries and their mandate was not to supply fish to the private industry, so there were, there was a lot of push and pull going on between the feds and the province, um, so the numbers were inadequate, so we tried a number of species, we tried rainbow trout, and, you know, they were partially successful, there was issues with them too. The basic problem was trying to get numbers in the water. You know we went from one cage of 1,000 fish to two cages of 4,000 fish. Half were salmon, and half were rainbow trout, and then we went to four cages, again a mix of salmon and rainbow trout, you know. Up until 1985 there were no private hatcheries producing fish, and it was a struggle to get fish. And in 1983 and 4 the government started to encourage people to get into the industry so that just added to the demand on the limited supply there was. So of course then we were learning about the fish, what they*

***Interviewer:** Did you go to Norway?*

***Sam:** Yup. I was one of, there was a group of five of us, in '81, '82. Had to take a*

*leave of absence from [work] and put our money into pay for the trip, and that was really interesting, but you always learn a whole lot more once you learn a little bit, we didn't have a clue, or I didn't anyway. We saw what was going on, and it turns out we made many of the mistakes that they made, but that's the way it goes. I mean we have a totally different environment here and we had to learn to swim in this environment. And we couldn't assume that this environment was like the Norwegian environment, 'cause it wasn't, still isn't. But anyway, we worked away, slowly grew. Then 1985, the uh, 1984 we had furunculosis, at that point it was really considered, I guess the way ISA is now, a really terrible thing to have. It came with fish from one of the hatcheries. Anyway we were able to get a guy over, [name] from Scotland. He was the head of the aquaculture, was it aquaculture department at Sterling University? And he travelled all over the world, with fish medicine. He was really good. A wonderful fellow, and he brought over with him some oxytetracycline, no, oxolinicacid, which is now kinda of what we use, but anyway, we fixed our furunculosis problem, which also turned out to be exacerbated by oxygen levels, low oxygen levels. So it wasn't simply from furunculosis. Actually I think it is questionable as to whether or not if we hadn't had oxygen problems, if we wouldn't have had furunculosis, but anyway, we fixed that, but one of the things that he strongly recommended to my partner and me was that we possibly do what farmers have done forever, which is to separate the year classes of your stocks. So we pushed really hard on the government to be able to do that, which meant getting another site, actually two more sites. It was a struggle, the province didn't want to do that, because, well the thinking was, fish farming was going to be the answer to the dying fish industry, the herring industry was going down, the lobster fishery was going down, the ground fishery was going down and they were desperately looking to create work. If they started giving out, we have a limited geography here that is suitable for aquaculture, so they were afraid that if they gave one person multiple sites, then there wouldn't be anything for anybody else. So they really resisted. And finally we were able to talk them into giving us one other site. We started alternating our year classes. In '85 we got the first fish produced by the first private hatchery, [name], um, and put them in [name] just down the river here. And so, you know, from that point forward, things started to get to the point where we were self-sustaining. The banks were willing to talk to us. And we didn't have to put the house and all the kids and the dog on the front lawn. It didn't mean that it completely worked, but it was starting. Then we built, in '84, we built this plant, and it was just to process salmon.*

The quote also exemplifies the major role of government in the growth of the business.

This retired salmon farmer, due to connections with specialists in the industry in other countries, and his ability to pressure the government to allow an additional site in order to separate the salmon's year classes as a way to limit disease, managed to run a successful

business that was eventually bought out by Multinational Fish Farm. While extremely rare at the time, allowing one company to own more than one site was a policy that the government eventually implemented in the following decade, thereby enhancing, in the longer term, the ability of large companies to take over the industry.

#### **6.4 The Role of Government in Aiding Corporate Expansion**

The aquaculture industries in the provinces of NB and BC both developed into industries dominated by multinational corporations, albeit through different routes. Aquaculture took off in the 1980s in both provinces, and each had initial trial-and-error periods, with farms on a very small scale dating as far back as the 1960s in BC (Robson 2006) and the late 1970s in NB (Phyne 1996). Both industries were, in their early stages, also connected to the burgeoning aquaculture industry in Norway, as Sam mentions in the quote above. An overview of the initial stages of aquaculture in NB provided below shows that aquaculture grew quickly, during the period just after the global economic and political transition from a Keynesian state to a neoliberal one. Young and Matthews (2010) argue that it was the first major resource industry in Canada to mature under a neoliberal political economic framework, affecting all aspects of this industry.

The development of aquaculture in NB, specifically of Multinational Fish Farm, seems to be a poster child for this neoliberal economic business model indicative of aquaculture industries elsewhere in Canada and abroad. Joan Marshall investigated the growth of aquaculture in NB in relation to both its ownership patterns and how property regimes influenced farm site locations, and how these influenced community relations. She notes that aquaculture is unique in its business model because, despite its relatively

recent development, it is an industry that is inherently multinational and thus globally integrated within world markets, and is also heavily based in scientific research. Marshall (2001) links the growth of a specific kind of aquaculture in NB (and in Canada in general, as well as globally) – one that is market-based, privatized, and caters to global and corporate interests over communities – with the increasing privatization and scientific management of the capture fishery, exemplified by the discussion in the previous chapter. Thus while Marshall does not talk about financialization, she identifies the shift in focus away from a corporate model with a community and production focus and its negative ramifications.

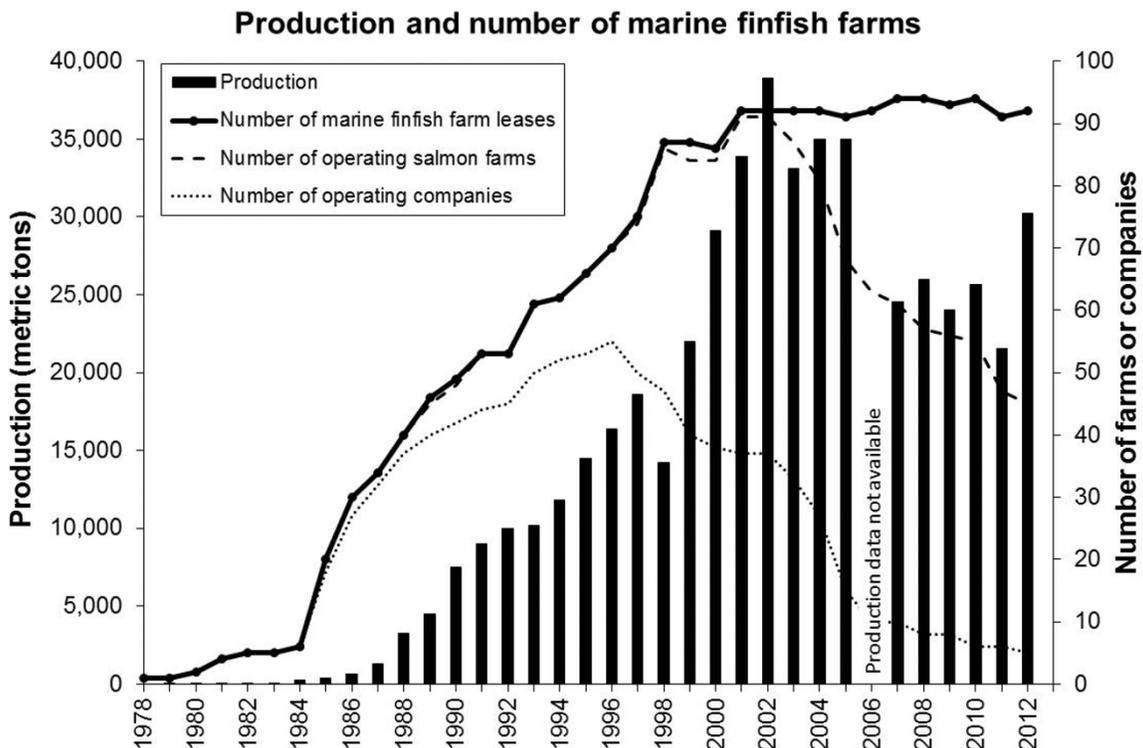
The development of the provincial policies that regulated aquaculture also aided in shaping its growth. When aquaculture first began in NB, there were no policies, legislation, or guidelines regulating the industry. In 1984, a Southern New Brunswick Aquaculture Development Committee (SNBADC) was established. The committee, composed of representatives from the provincial government and those currently in the industry, set the minimum distance between farms. The committee's main aim was the growth of the industry, and thus, against the advice of some of those already in the industry, as well as experiences in Norway and Scotland, minimum distances were set to be much shorter than recommended. In the final 1985 report, *Guidelines for Physical Separation of Salmonid Aquaculture Farms*, the minimum distance was set at 305 metres, much less than the 1,000 metre minimum in Norway, and 1.6 km minimum in Scotland at that time. Already inadequate, the minimum guidelines were not enforced throughout the nineties, contributing to devastating disease outbreaks (Anderson 2007).

From 1986 to 1991, a moratorium on new applications for farm sites was in place to allow for the development of legislation, policies, and adequate smolt production. This actually did not slow the rate of growth, as applications submitted before 1986 continued to be processed and accepted (Chang et al. 2014). While the federal government was in control of research, development, and protection of the habitat, the NB provincial government, through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1989, was in control of licensing and leasing, and both governments together controlled where new sites would be placed (Phyne 1996; Chang et al. 2014). The Aquaculture Act was developed in 1988, and its core objectives focused on incorporating local involvement, and protection of the traditional fishery (Marshall 2001). When the Act of 1988 was enforced in 1991, the moratorium on new farm applications was lifted, and as the chart below shows, the number of farms continued to grow until 2006, although at a much slower rate after 2000. This was due to mergers and acquisitions of companies, resulting in a reduction from a high of forty-eight companies in 1996 down to three, and coincided with a change in government policy that allowed companies to own more than one site (Chang et al. 2014, 7).

During the early 1990s, Canada was the fifth-largest producer of farmed salmon in the world, and most of it was coming from NB (Phyne 1996). Due to government support of the aquaculture industry, combined with the industry's success, many local people and businesses entered the aquaculture industry at this time, including NB Cannery and a Norwegian company that was also active in BC. It was these companies, along with another local one, that would come to dominate the industry in the next decade. For the

most part, resistance to this industry was minimal, but its expansion was not without some conflict. Opposition came from local herring weir fishers and environmental groups. One of the main areas of conflict was competition over marine space, as areas that are good for herring weirs are also good for salmon cages (Phyne 1996; Marshall 2001). Some of this conflict subsided with the conversion of weir operations into salmon farming sites. The rapid development of the latter industry in NB during the 1990s and later resulted in a market for fishers to lease their weir locations for use as aquaculture sites.

**Figure 6.1 Growth of Fish Farms in NB 1978-2012**



(Chang et al. 2014, 7, republished with permission)

According to Marshall, “Suddenly, a site that might have sold to a local family for \$12,000 in 1990 became a financial investment that grew to about \$1 million in 2004” (2009, 99), with the income generated by leasing (“doing nothing”) as opposed to harvesting. The entry of investors from outside the fishery who came in and built up weirs that were no longer operating, and then leased out the sites for aquaculture, contributed to speculation, to the decline of the weir fishery (Marshall 2009), and to an increase in the role of financial capital in dictating control over and use of the sites. This and other processes supported the relatively rapid consolidation of control over the NB aquaculture industry in the hands of a few companies.

Pushback against the NB aquaculture industry was also muted due to the abundance of herring used for fish feed. As close to eighty percent of feed supplied to farmers came from NB Cannery, weir fishermen were dependent on the processing company and, indirectly, on aquaculture for a market, and would be going against their own interests if they were to raise too much opposition to it (Phyne 1996). As herring stocks continued to decline during this time, more herring fishers entered the aquaculture industry, but those who remained in the herring fishery were divided in their support (Marshall 2001; Phyne 1996). Due to rapid growth, and subsequent disease outbreaks, a moratorium on any new sites was again placed on the industry in 1998, and was lifted two years later, after the announcement of revision to the Aquaculture Act in October 2000 (Marshall 2001).

### **6.5 The Rise of Multinationals in Aquaculture**

Multinational companies, aided by government policies, were able to gain control of the aquaculture industry more quickly in BC than in NB. While BC really only experienced

three years during which the industry was dominated by small businesses, NB was able to maintain a small mom-and-pop business model for almost two decades. The fact that so many people in the area of my study had been in the aquaculture industry, or knew someone who had been, may have been a factor in the lack of animosity to the industry there compared to BC. Chang et al. 2014 voice a similar hypothesis, suggesting, “[l]ocal ownership, together with the large number of jobs for local residents, are probably the main reasons for the general favorable attitude of the public in [NB] toward salmon farming, although there is considerable opposition” (10). Other scholars have speculated that the way the location of sites was decided may also be the reason for the lower levels of opposition experienced in NB compared to both BC and NS, as decision-making processes included representatives from both government and the traditional fishery (Phyne 1996).

Once these large corporations began to dominate the industry, they also began restructuring it, vertically integrating by acquiring their own seafood processing and service companies (Bjørndal et al. 2003; Ache and Khatun 2006). This was the model followed not just by the dominant firm in NB, but within the aquaculture industry throughout the rest of the developed world as well (Borch 1999; Liu et al. 2003), exemplifying expensive, high-risk capital accumulation and flow in the aquaculture industry. This is explained in the following passage:

With the increasing globalization of industry, the face of large multinational companies and their subsidiaries is always changing as companies are acquired, closed or sold. The salmon farming industry, because of high capital costs and capture profit-and-loss swings, is perhaps one of the most fluid when it comes to ownership change. One result is that one year the second-largest company may have been the fifth largest in the previous year, and so on. As of late 2005, the

four multinational companies . . . were among the top salmon farming companies in the world (Robson 2006, 43).

Noteworthy is Robson's (2010) use of the word "fluid" to describe the mergers and acquisitions within the aquaculture industry. Fluidity, similar to Harvey's (2010) flow of capital, speaks to the way in which the aquaculture industry has easily adapted to and prospered under a corporate capital business model.

In BC, continual mergers and buyouts make it hard to keep track of ownership changes, especially since companies may or may not keep the original names of the companies they have bought out or merged with. By 2010, when I was conducting research in BC, the four top companies had merged into two, and there were really only three large multinationals, and two smaller, locally focused salmon-farming companies left. As well, by 2003, BC production levels had far outstripped NB, with BC becoming the world's fourth-largest producer of farmed salmon (Rayner and Howlett 2003).

Although it is hard to explain adequately the complex series of mergers and takeovers that occurred in this period without naming study companies, in general these occurred transnationally, and the companies that dominated in New Brunswick were also dominant in British Columbia, Chile, Scotland and Norway (Asche and Bjørndal 2011). An example of this transnational series of corporate takeovers and mergers can be seen by looking at a snapshot of the changing location of the top global company headquarters in a four-year period between 2004 and 2008 (see table 6.1, below). For reasons of anonymity, I have not included the names of the companies, but the company in the number one spot for both 2004 and 2008 is the same one – it simply switched the location of its head office due to merging with other companies. This company controls nearly

two-thirds of the global market for aquaculture (Harvey and Milewski 2007). Another complexity is the selling-off of parts, or subsidiaries, in specific geographical regions. For example, one company in Canada may buy the Scottish segment of a Norwegian company. This is further complicated when parent companies or subsidiaries sell parts of their companies to another company, but retain partial ownership through shares.

**Table 6.1 Headquarters of Top Global Aquaculture Companies 2004–2008**

Ranking	Location of Head Office 2004	Ranking	Location of Head Office 2008
1	Netherlands	1	Norway
2	Chile	2	Norway
3	Norway	3	Chile
4	Norway	4	Norway
5	Norway	5	Canada
6	Norway	6	Norway
7	Chile	7	Norway
8	Chile	8	Chile
9	Chile	9	Chile
10	Chile	10	Japan

(Data modified from Asche and Bjørndal 2011, 40)

The intense vertical integration of aquaculture companies globally is argued by Harvey and Milewski (2007) to be somewhat ironic because, as they explain:

While the vertically integrated industrial food production model has been touted as the only financially viable corporate structure for salmon aquaculture,

this same model has produced the glut of farmed salmon on the global market which results in chronically depressed prices in the lucrative North American market. The only way to get the prices up is to cut global production or consolidate the industry to the point where a few companies can control and manipulate the market (7).

Below I outline the buying, selling, and merging process that occurred in the NB aquaculture industry, leading to control of NB aquaculture by three companies.

### **6.6 Global Capital Aquaculture Corporations in NB, 2000–2014**

The development of the large multinational aquaculture corporations that now dominate the seafood industry in Canada and globally was achieved through mergers and acquisitions, mostly in the name of maintaining a competitive edge on the global economic playing field. This section looks more closely at these processes as they occurred in NB between 2000 and 2014 by tracing the dominance of one multinational aquaculture company in the region.

In NB, the consolidation of the industry via the bankruptcies of many aquaculture companies and the subsequent buyouts by large multinational companies occurred throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s, when ISA (infectious salmon anemia) and sea lice outbreaks regularly occurred, from which many companies were unable to recover economically (Harvey and Milewski 2007). The first large sea lice outbreak occurred in 1995, followed by outbreaks of ISA in 1996, 1998, 2001 (followed by the record-breaking lows in the price of salmon in 2002 mentioned above), and 2006 (Chang et al. 2014).

Canadian governments attempted to balance support of resource mega-projects and existing resource industries with environmental protection, creating a policy

regime focusing on environmental assessments and mitigation in so doing. This regime was not always proven successful in balancing these two interests, and aquaculture is a good case in point (Rayner and Howlett 2003, 7).

The response from government was immediate, but not intense enough, due to concerns that production would be negatively affected. The creation of Sea Louse Management Zones occurred in 1995. Mandatory single-year class separation and fallowing periods would not be introduced until 2001, and not extended to a three-year fallow period until 2006 (Chang et al. 2014). The combination of government regulation, which unfortunately exacerbated fish health problems, and the economic hardships that ensued, resulted in consolidation:

Until the late 1990s, most farming companies in [NB] operated only one marine grow-out site each. As a consequence of disease problems, the implementation of single year class farming within a bay management area framework, and economic factors, companies owning only one grow-out site are no longer viable. As a result, there has been consolidation of ownership within the industry. In 2012, the 45 active salmon farms were controlled by just five companies, with one company operating 60% of the farms (Chang et al. 2014, 10).

While Chang et al. contend that there are five companies, in reality there are only three. One company is located on an island, while the second is locally owned, much smaller, and not vertically integrated, and is referred to here as Small Fish Farm. Only one company, Multinational Fish Farm, is dominant, and is a large multinational company that is still locally owned. Table 6.4 provides a list of the pseudonyms for the aquaculture companies included in this study.

In an interview, a leader in the salmon farming industry in Atlantic Canada described the complexity of aquaculture ownership in the region. She states that there are six companies in NB, but in actuality only three have farms in the area. The Multinational

Fish Farm owns two of the other, smaller companies, and one smaller company is only located in NB by virtue of a hatchery and head office; its farms were located in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Table 6.2 Farmed Seafood Company Key**

Farmed Seafood Company Key	
<b>Multinational Fish Farm</b>	Large aquaculture company in NB that has developed into a large multinational corporation.
<b>Small Fish Farm</b>	The smaller aquaculture company in NB.

The expansion and takeover of the many smaller companies in NB are detailed in this section, and those details were taken from Multinational Fish Farm’s website. The company started out with one site in 1985, but purchased a hatchery in 1989 to deal with the low numbers of broodstock. In 1993, it incorporated, and the next year it began a trajectory of expansion and vertical as well as horizontal integration, starting with the purchase of a processing company and another hatchery, establishing a brand name for its salmon, creating its own net-making and net-mending company, and bringing its vaccinations in-house. In 1997, it bought a second processing plant in Prince Edward Island that processed specialty products, allowing the company to expand its value-added product line. In 1998, it acquired two more salmon farms in NB, and the following year one more in Nova Scotia. In 2000, the company expanded outside of Canada, purchasing a smoked-fish company in Maine. It moved the Maine smoked-fish operation to the PEI plant. It purchased three more companies, including two in Nova Scotia and one in Quebec. In 2001, the PEI plant was reopened after it was renovated to handle the

increased volume from the purchase and relocation of the Maine plant. In 2002, the company built a new building for its net-making company, bought a second company in Quebec, and purchased one in Illinois, opening up access to the market in the midwestern United States.

The next three years marked an important shift in NB as the company bought up the remaining aquaculture companies in the region, aside from the two that currently remain. Two of the companies it purchased were subsidiaries of large multinational companies, including one owned by NB Cannery, and the other by the largest aquaculture company in the world. This effectively gave this company control over the industry in NB, including the workforce. It restructured the workforce and the industry over time (see chapter 7), while also starting its own transportation company, moving its breeding program in-house, buying a feed company, and buying another company in Maine. In a report on the aquaculture industry published in 2007, Multinational Fish Farm was described as “consolidating nearly total control of the East coast industry including New Brunswick, Maine and Nova Scotia, in the hands of one private company” (Harvey and Milewski 2007).

In 2007, Multinational Fish Farm began to expand into Newfoundland and Labrador, bought another feed company in Nova Scotia and started its own feed company. In 2008, it received an eco-label accreditation from Global Trust, bought a company in Chile, and bought a seafood distributing company in Nova Scotia. In 2010, it bought another seafood import-and-distribution business. Both distribution businesses include farmed and capture-caught seafood products, which it sells under retail and

**Table 6.3 Multinational Fish Farm Process of Acquisitions**

1985	Bought one farm site
1989	Bought first Hatchery
1993	Incorporated
1994	Bought Processing Plant
	Bought second hatchery
	Created label for salmon
	Created own net making/mending company
1997	Bought a Processing Plant in PEI for specialty products
1998	Bought two farms in New Brunswick
1999	Bought farm in Nova Scotia
2000	Bought Company in Maine, relocated it to PEI company
	Bought 3 farms in Nova Scotia
	Bought 1 farm in Quebec
2002	Built new building for its Net Company
	Bought a company in Quebec and in Illinois
2003	Bought four companies in New Brunswick
2004	Started own transportation company
	Bought a feed company
	Moved breeding in house
	Bought company in Maine
2005	Bought the other two multinational companies in NB
2007	Expanded into Newfoundland
	Bought food company in Nova Scotia
	Created its own food company
2008	Became certified through Global Trust.
	Bought company in Chile
	Bought distributing company in Nova Scotia.
2010	Bought a second distribution company
2011	Bought a Sea Bass Farm in Spain
	Completed fish hatchery in NL
2012	Becomes certified to British Retail Consortium Standard for Food Quality and Safety.
2013	Nova Scotia distributing subsidiary launched a new brand of Capture caught seafood.
	Created Industrial Research Chair in partnership with NSERC and Dalhousie University.
2014	Certified to the Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) standard for processing plants, feed company and specific farm sites in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Maine.
	Bought Company in Scotland.

private labels. It also purchased a sea-bass farming company in Spain, and completed construction on a fish hatchery in NL. The company's processing plants were certified by the British Retail Consortium (BRC) Standard for food quality and safety in 2012. In 2013, the Nova Scotia distribution company launched a brand of capture-caught seafood, mostly halibut, haddock, and swordfish, promising "to be fresh, local, premium, traceable and responsible."

Multinational Fish Farm also partnered with the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and Dalhousie University, creating the Industrial Research Chair (IRC) in sustainable aquaculture. And in 2014, the company applied for certification under the Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) standard for its processing, feed, and specific farm sites in NB, NS, Maine and NL. It also bought a subsidiary in Scotland from the world's leading aquaculture company, and moved its processing facility from one community in NL to another due to non-renewal of a lease. The new processing plant will be processing alongside another company of which it is a partial owner, as described above. The company's growth timeline (see figure 6.1 for an outline of this growth) is evidence of its corporate strategy of vertical and horizontal integration across all aspects of the industry, not just from hatchery to processing and marketing, but also in environmental monitoring and research.

The ability of companies to expand is somewhat dependent on government funding, and, as mentioned above, is directly tied to governance. The federal government's role as regulator and protector of Canada's fishing industries did not dampen its enthusiasm in supporting the growth of aquaculture. As large multinational companies dominated the

industries first in BC, then NB, government support did not waiver, despite changes to the professed ideological stances of those in power. During the expansion of the aquaculture industry in Canada, the provincial premiers of both BC and NB, as well as the federal prime ministers, were from different political parties. In NB, the premier in the early 1980s was from the Progressive Conservative party (PC), the only competition coming from the Liberal Party, which held power from 1987 to 1999, and then again from 2006 to 2010.

On a federal level, the two parties that have traded power back and forth have been the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives/Conservative Party of Canada, with Liberals holding power from 1980 until 2006, except for a period between 1984 and 1993 (when the Progressive Conservatives were in power). In 2003, the PCs joined the new Conservative Party, which won the election in 2006 and was still in power in 2014. Phyne (2010) points out that more critical than whether a government is liberal, conservative, or something else is its overall ideology. A neoliberal regime positions all governments as the footmen of capital, which has had more effect on the development of capital than the specific parties and their economic policies. For example, in the beginning stages of aquaculture development, the premier of New Brunswick, Liberal leader Frank McKenna, who held office from 1987 to 1997, encouraged business both large and small. He is credited with bringing neoliberal policy to New Brunswick in that, for example, “[h]e imposed a one-year wage freeze for public sector workers. He resisted introduction of anti-scab legislation, protection for public sector casual workers and reform of the Workers Compensation Act” (McFarland 2012, 6–7). McKenna catered to

large corporations, encouraging them to call his 1-800-MCKENNA line directly, and offering tax breaks. Below is a critical look at his time in office:

Many would argue that the McKenna magic is more illusion than substance and what is occurring is a carefully orchestrated campaign guided by neo-conservative principles. These are the rules which McKenna has attached to this campaign. First, the McKenna government and senior civil servants must always present an unwavering upbeat tone never whining about reduced federal transfers or lost contracts. The message must always be that the government is in control; it has a plan. Second, relations with the federal government must be cultivated as the federal government must be onside if certain economic efforts and social reforms are to be successful. And third, sell, sell, sell the province as a good place to do business whenever and wherever possible as evidenced by numerous advertisements in key metropolitan newspapers urging corporate executive to call McKenna directly about business possibilities in New Brunswick (Mullaly 1997, 48).

Exemplified in the above excerpt is the political environment that was in existence during the aquaculture industry's boom time in the area of my research. Similarly, many of my informants noted the provincial government's role in substantial subsidization of the aquaculture boom:

***Shaun:** [Name of aquaculture company] is the big aquaculture industry, so if you go back, I think they are only 15 years old, so once they got going, and they opened operations here in [name of community], so its kind of been just balling along since that, and it was something that the government here, the provincial government targeted, it was a growth industry. I used to work for the provincial government and it was a target industry that they saw having the potential for future growth, and they put a lot of special programs and funding in place to help it as best they could.*

In addition to policies generating economic incentives, ecological policies permitting the relatively short distances between farming cages were also implemented, even though these policies were opposed by some of those who had hands-on experience in the industry. These policies were ultimately a major, if not *the* major, factor in subsequent disease outbreaks and the industry-wide bankruptcy of most of the smaller

aquaculture companies. As discussed above, the NB aquaculture industry underwent a period with no regulation, followed by one featuring policies that were revised to allow for growth and expansion. The process of continual renewal is explained in the following quotation: “The rules governing aquaculture in Canada have rarely stood still, and have been overhauled numerous times at both provincial and federal levels” (Young and Matthews 2010, 210). For example, the Aquaculture Act that came into effect in NB in 1991 was revised in 2000 and 2006. It seems that smaller companies were viable in the period of no regulation, but that with the implementation of regulation, policy favored larger, and later multinational, companies that had the financial backing to buy up the available sites.

NB aquaculture regulations pale in comparison to those of BC, considered by many to be the most regulated province in this area since 2001 (Young and Matthews 2010). The federal government regulates the aquaculture industry through the Fisheries Act, but, in total, seventeen different departments share responsibility for this regulation, including Environment Canada, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, and Health Canada (Liu et al. 2013). The federal government has been criticized for occupying a position as manager and conservator of the capture fishery while simultaneously playing a leading role in the development of the aquaculture industry, both directly through individual business subsidies and indirectly through investment in aquaculture research and development.

Disagreements exist over whether DFO should manage the industry through the Fisheries Act, or should be managing it with regulations similar to those governing

agriculture (Young and Werring 2006; Bastien 2004; Howlett and Brownsy 2008; Robson 2006).

**Table 6.4 Government Funding of Aquaculture 2008**

<b>Federal Government</b>	<b>New Brunswick Government</b>	<b>British Columbia</b>
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Loan Guarantee Fund	Shellfish Aquaculture
Western Economic Diversification	Total Development Fund	Working Capital Fund
Farm Credit Canada		Aquaculture and Environment Fund Malaspina University-Collage
Aquaculture Partnership Program (OCAD)		University of British Columbia, Chair in Sustainable Aquaculture
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada		Various agencies
Aquaculture Collaborative Research and Development Program (DFO),		
AquaNet (DFO, NSERC, SSHRC)		

Liu et al. (2013) argue that international governance of the industry is the way forward, as it is a global industry. Young and Matthews (2010, 235–6) provide a list of subsidies, both direct and indirect, that federal and provincial governments provide to the aquaculture industry. Listed are the subsidies available in 2008 from the federal government, as well as from the provinces of NB and BC (see table 6.4).

There is also funding available from the provinces of PEI, Newfoundland, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. An example of a company based in one province yet aided by government funding in another is Multinational Fish Farm, which was able to access government aid not just at the federal, but also the provincial, level in PEI with its expansion into PEI in 1997.

This expansion, and the subsequent renovation of the plant to accommodate increased production resulting from the purchase of the plant in Maine (detailed above), was subsidized at the level of just under a million dollars by a combination of federal and provincial loans (more than half of which were forgivable). The PEI government itself provided a \$470,000 forgivable loan; the federal government, alongside the provincial government, provided an additional \$100,000; and the federal government provided a \$400,000 repayable loan through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) (PEI News Release 2001). The following year, due to the acquisition of the company in Illinois, the same plant in PEI underwent a \$1.7 million expansion, backed again by close to a million dollars in government funding. This included \$490,000 in a forgivable loan from the provincial government, coupled with a \$500,000 repayable loan from the federal ACOA program (PEI News Release 2002). ACOA was a significant supporter of aquaculture, contributing \$34 million via interest-free and (conditional) non-repayable loans, as well as interest buy-downs and loan guarantees, to NB aquaculture between 1985 and 1996 (Harvey and Milewski 2007). The federal government dedicated \$75 million over five years, and then \$15 million a year from then on. A new Aquaculture Policy Framework, with two pillars, accompanied the government program. The two

pillars were: 1) increased public confidence in the sustainability of aquaculture development, and 2) increased industry competitiveness in global markets. Notably, the first pillar focuses not on improving the industry's sustainability quotient, but on influencing public perception of the industry. The second is very clear as to the department's role as promoter and enabler of the industry, without reference to sustainability issues (Harvey and Milewski 2007, 13). Multinational Fish Farm clearly shows its dominance in Atlantic Canada, owning multiple businesses and farms in all the Atlantic provinces. Because there is not much physical space to grow in NB, expansion of the aquaculture industry is now focused on the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, whose provincial governments are also backing the industry heavily (Chang et al. 2014).

The interregional nature of the aquaculture industry in NB means that it can avail itself of both federal and multiple provincial subsidies (or international ones, as was the case in BC), as discussed in the case of its processing plant renovation and expansion the following year. Thus, larger multinational companies can avail themselves of more funds to expand their businesses.

As shown in this chapter, the aquaculture industry in NB, via government policies, has moved away from consisting of many small, locally owned companies, and is now controlled, for the most part, by one large multinational corporation. The next section looks at how this ownership structure has responded to the much-touted job-creation potential in the area.

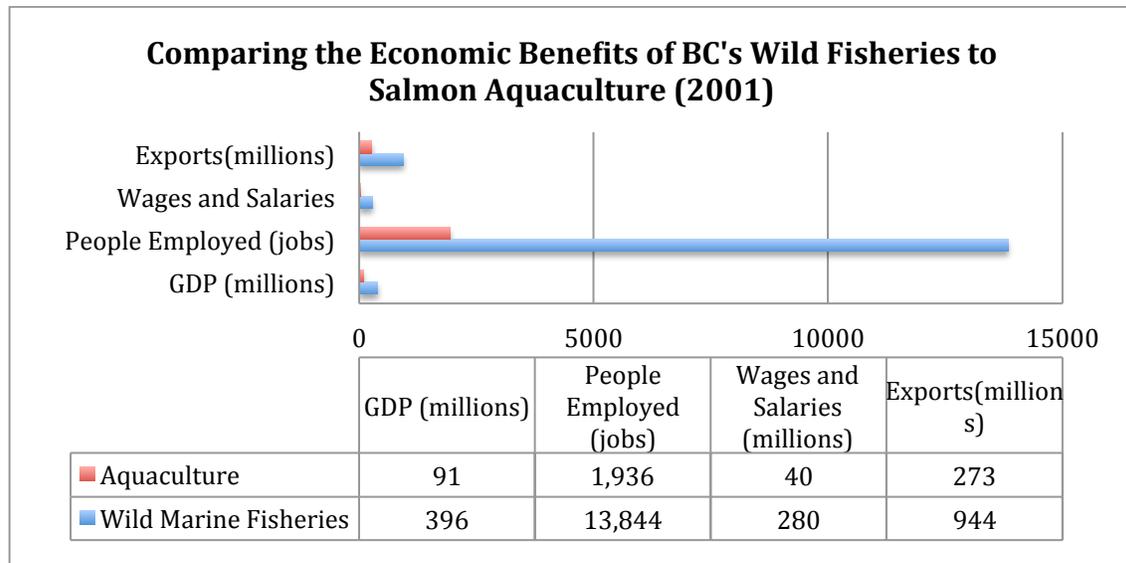
## 6.7 Aquaculture as a Source of Good Jobs?

As previously discussed, one of the key arguments in favor of aquaculture is its potential economic contribution, in terms of both employment and investment, especially in rural coastal communities with high unemployment rates that are struggling due to the decrease in other resource occupations such as those in forestry, mining and the traditional fishery. This section looks at how the aquaculture industry did not become the labour savior in parts of NB it was thought to have the potential to be.

When statisticians compare the economic benefits and wages of the capture and farmed industries, often only capture fishery statistics are included, not the sports fishery and the seafood processing industry, both of which are major economic and employment drivers in the fishery. Marshall (2003), when comparing the economic benefits of aquaculture and the capture fishery, includes both seafood processing and sport fishery statistics (I also do so in my comparisons below), which significantly changes the levels of impact of the capture fishery in comparison to aquaculture. The table (6.5) below demonstrate that while aquaculture was a growth industry in 2001, it paled in comparison to the capture fisheries in terms of contributions to GDP, employment, wages, and exports. Data from a 2012 BC study titled *British Columbia's Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector* are used to compare the relative contributions to GDP, employment, wages, and exports from 2001 and 2011 respectively, for both aquaculture and the capture fishery in that province. The results clearly show that even with the drastic reduction of labour in the capture fishery, the capture fishery is a much stronger economic driver than aquaculture. Because the two studies use different measures to calculate their data, the

numbers from Marshall’s study are different, but the overall trend is apparent. When comparing the two, the capture seafood industry in BC is much more significant in its economic impact.

**Table 6.5 Comparison of Economic Benefits of BC's Capture and Farmed Fisheries**



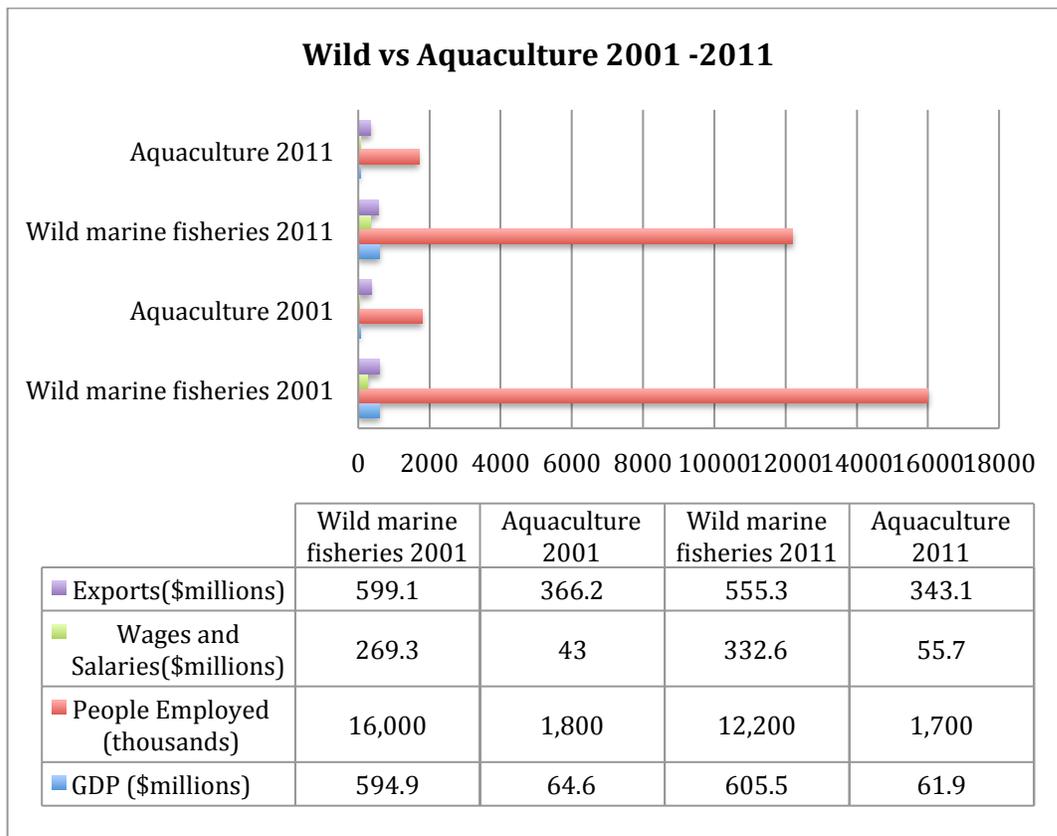
(Marshall 2003, 5).

It is also important to note the variation in findings based on what data goes into calculations: Young and Matthews (2010) found large discrepancies in aquaculture employment data (detailed in chapter 7). What is apparent from table 6.6 below is that *both* the capture and the farmed industries decreased in terms of their contributions to exports and employment, but they also experienced increases in wages and salaries between 2001 and 2011. As well, the capture fishery had in fact increased its contribution to GDP, although this increase was mostly due to the sports fishing industry, while aquaculture experienced a decrease. The argument that the capture fishery actually outproduces and employs more people than the aquaculture industry can also be made in Atlantic Canada. Milewski (2012), in an online blog, argues that “[i]n 2010 Canada’s

exports of wild capture fish and seafood products were worth more than \$3.4 billion, three times the value of aquaculture exports.

Lobster exports alone almost equal that of aquaculture export. In Atlantic Canada, for every job in aquaculture, there are at least 10 jobs in the traditional fisheries.”

**Table 6.6 BC's Capture and Aquaculture Economic Contributions**



Stroemer and Wilson 2012. Capture marine fisheries data for both 2001 and 2008 include capture, seafood processing, and the sport fishery industries. Aquaculture data for both 2001 and 2008 included both finfish and shellfish aquaculture.

Thus, while aquaculture is touted by the Canadian aquaculture industry and both provincial and national levels of governments as an extraordinary economic booster in rural areas in terms of GDP, employment, and wages, when one actually factors in the entire capture fishery, aquaculture may not be as significant in comparison. This then

poses the question of why the government invests so much in the expansion of the aquaculture industry in rural areas. Narratives about the creation of large numbers of jobs may be cited as a reason for bringing aquaculture to rural and coastal areas suffering from high unemployment. Support for increased mechanization through provincial funding is justified by the promise of job creation.

What is funded is investment in modernization, which actually means increased mechanization in the industry, which leads not only to reduced employment through replacement of workers with machines, but also to cheaper employment through the replacement of piecework with hourly wages (Harvey 2010). As companies, in order to maintain their competitiveness, merge and buy out competitors, this too reduces employment. As employment, job opportunities, and plants' commitment to workers and communities decreases, this significantly changes the dynamics of the community. There are thus inherent contradictions within the narrative used by government to support the growth and expansion of the aquaculture industry. In NB, while the aquaculture industry was initially created as a source of new employment and income for local fishermen and plant workers, most, if not all, of the smaller, local enterprises were absorbed as the neoliberal global regime redefined the time/space configuration to direct profits toward accumulation. This has usually been to the detriment of workers. The growth and dominance of corporate capitalism in the aquaculture industry in NB has actually decreased the number of businesses that cater to the aquaculture industry.

A significant aspect of aquaculture that affects the communities in which it is situated is the privatization of a resource and an industry that were previously public. The

fact that aquaculture is now a private industry, and is vertically and horizontally integrated, means that as more and more facets of the industry become integrated under its corporate umbrella, they too become privatized. This redefines rights of access to fish, from common property to private, or from governmentally (externally) regulated to privately (internally) regulated; as Marshall (2001) states, “The technology of aquaculture and its specific forms of production in a context of increasing dominance of the market side of the food industry, are factors that define the conditions for change from a situation of ‘public goods’ to one of ‘private goods’, dominated by global and corporate interests” (343). Also privatized are the environmental control components of aquaculture, which the industry effectively transfers in-house via the development of eco-certifications (Vandergeest 2007).

The extent of vertical and horizontal integration enjoyed by Multinational Fish Farm reduces the potential for economic opportunities within the community, as it limits the number of small business opportunities for local residents. And, as we see in the quoted passages below, when aquaculture was smaller and family-owned, it offered many more economic and employment opportunities within the community. Harvey (2010) explains this, asserting that “there are all sorts of tricks whereby big capital can drive out small. . . . The disposition of the small operators (neighborhood stores or family farms) to make way for large enterprises (supermarket businesses and agribusiness), frequently with the aid of credit mechanisms, has also been long standing practice” (50). The statement below by Darren, a former employee, details the creation (and demise) of a processing plant co-owned among many of the small companies.

***Darren:** Uh, aquaculture has never really slowed down. Aquaculture started out . . . I am thinking mostly smaller companies, 'cause there used to be, you would go out there and there was companies everywhere. And then they had a bad couple of seasons and then people, you know the way feed companies put out their, you know, marketed their feed I guess, the guys didn't have to pay for it up front, what they would do was pay for it as their stocks went, and when they would have problem with their stocks, you know, say they got a bad hit by seals, or there was sea lice, or ISA that lost money for them, a lot of the feed companies came in and just took over their sites and just pushed them out. And then what they would do is, then other companies would buy them. So [large aquaculture company] had the backing that they bought most of these small companies out. So there is only a few small companies left, right, besides [large aquaculture company]. But when everybody was in it, it kind of looked like, oh look, look at the boom here, because there was a bunch of different processing plants. . . . Um, but, like I say, back when there were many different guys here owning sites, there was always all these little plants everywhere, so everybody had a plant so there was more people employed to each one.*

***Interviewer:** Was there more spin off companies then too?*

***Darren:** Yeah. Because each person wanted to deal with their own guys, and they wanted. . . . Net companies around here, you could have found them anywhere. I mean for a while, we worked with the industry, because a friend of ours, had an oxygen problem one year, and we were divers and we said hey we can fix that. And we went and did our thing, and it caught on. And so we had a business that we ran like that for a while.*

Darren identifies the effects of the corporate capital business model on the economic (and thus employment) prosperity of the community. He speaks of the negative environmental impacts of the aquaculture industry on its fish stocks and how that contributed to consolidation and the shift into a corporate capital model of consume-or-be-consumed, which conflicts so tragically with the natural rhythm of the stocks.

George, another study participant, also discusses how the aquaculture industry consolidated in the area, but he connects this to the larger global influences of the market price of farmed salmon. George adopts the ideological narrative of corporate capital growth – that we must streamline inefficiencies, that this kind of growth is normal,

natural, and even good – despite the obvious negative consequences for local employment, encapsulating the discomfort and contradictory thoughts many people have about the aquaculture industry and its role in the community.

*George: Early eighties, it really started to take off commercially here. Eighty-five to '98, prosperity in this area – salmon prices were high, \$5/pound, now \$2.50. The industry was new then and there was competition from Norway and Chile, and this industry kept growing and growing and they were putting fish on the market and suppressing the price. The industries started growing and growing and the prices began to drop. I think it was in '99 prices fell below \$2 a barrel, \$1.30, \$1.40, which is not sustainable, it doesn't matter how big the producer, or how efficient you are – so the community really started to contract at that point, because people started to lay off and individuals started to have a really harder and harder time, and a few big businesses, a few big ones in the area in that time, that started to gobble up the smaller ones, and now there is really only one big one that gobbled up the other two larger ones. Of course whenever there is consolidation of, uh . . . power, let's say, in businesses it tends to eliminate jobs because there's efficiencies in terms of, right, in the grand scheme of themes in the economies of scale, and again, this is second hand, but from what I understand there seems to be a pretty big exodus of people since that happened. But having said that, if there wasn't aquaculture, things would be really bad right now. Like if the one big producer was to go out of business, for whatever reason in this area, this area is highly dependent on that, [NB Cannery] too, either industry whether the herring or the aquaculture, that would definitely decimate this area, we are highly dependent on it directly or indirectly.*

These participants' comments illustrate the development of the aquaculture industry in NB, and its progression from small, locally owned businesses to really just one major corporation expanding its monopoly. The aquaculture industry has grown, and has prospered, but it has done so at the expense of the small-scale capture industry, of better-paid jobs, and of the environment, instead of in support of them. These quotes identify community members' recognition of the significance of both aquaculture (as well as NB Cannery) to the economic prosperity of the community. These community members feel that if these industries were to leave, there would be significant hardships

for the community. What underlies these perceptions is uneasiness with the large corporate capital model that has not only reduced economic and employment opportunities, but introduced a sense of futility as well, a feeling that there is no alternative. People in an area that was once dominated by independent owner/operators and secure plant workers, all of whom were sustained via local resources, are now facing low-wage and insecure jobs (detailed in the next chapter). Yet informants refrained from demonizing the company: they voiced recognition that the company was just doing what it needed to do to survive and be profitable and, as it was locally owned, many people knew and worked for it, and thus their livelihoods, and in some cases families, were intricately interwoven with it, in their minds. More clearly contentious were the significant changes to wages and employment opportunities in this industry. Walters (2007) found similar findings in his study of fish-harvester attitudes towards aquaculture in the area. The aquaculture industry's, at least partially unfulfilled promise of good jobs, is thus experienced with conflicting emotions. Among the interviewees, this interplay of divided allegiances illuminates how individuals, and, by extension, the community as a whole, can simultaneously hold conflicting positions on aquaculture.

## **6.8 Chapter Summary**

This chapter and the preceding one have shown how new modes of corporate capitalism, specifically transnational capitalism, have developed over time under neoliberal political and economic policies in this area OF NB, as well as in BC, within the aquaculture industry. The growth of transnational capitalism has occurred both within Canada and globally (Carroll 2007; Klassen and Carroll 2011). While the two industries provide

different types of fish products under different commodity-chain styles, their similarities lie in their dedication to remaining competitive within the global economy through structural fixes, as well as in their reliance upon national- and provincial-level underwriting (through policies and funding), and their overlapping interactions with the local community and its citizen workforce.

Capital accumulation via constant growth and profit generation and reinvestment is tied to the ability of both the product and workers (and in this case the community) to align themselves with the rhythm of capital. The ease and subsequent degree of corporate capital mobility via increasing financialization processes in both the aquaculture and capture seafood processing industries have resulted in the high level of vertical integration of companies looking to maintain their competitiveness on the global scale. This growth has not provided many or even good jobs for those who used to work in the capture fishery, and it has not helped bolster wild seafood stocks. It has, however, been successful at the global level, and thus does provide some local jobs, but also brings in many workers through the TFWP. Increased privatization of a resource, as well as regulation of this resource in combination with the acquisition or bankruptcy of many small companies, is typical of big capital's strategies to amass even more money power (Harvey 2010). The next two chapters look at how new forms of cheap labour are created, mobilized, and maintained by new forms of corporate capital.

## 7 Manufactured Labour Shortages: The Creation of Cheap(er) Labour

“Seafood Industry Labour is a Canada-wide Problem: MacKinley”  
–*The Aurora*, 2014

*That is the way it is. And when you are facing poverty and kids and bills and some of them student loans, they got to leave, so I think the province is doing a really crappy job in retention. And I don't know what the answer is, I really don't. And I don't think they do either truthfully.*  
–Mandy

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter details labour force change and labour mobility over the last three decades in aquaculture and capture seafood processing in NB. The changes are tied to the cumulative effects of transnational corporate restructuring, national-level labour-related migration policies, and local-level resource boom-and-bust cycles occurring in NB (detailed in chapters 5 and 6) as well as in other provinces (and nations). These push-and-pull factors have shaped interprovincial and international labour mobility into and out of the study area – sometimes with the same workforce via circular migration patterns, such as with workers from NL. They were created through intersections between the political, economic and social relations at local, interregional, and international levels. Workers’ class, race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, religion, and their intersections, as well as the many other ways power dynamics are played out within communities and workplaces, are all significant factors in the composition of labour forces, but also in the construction or exacerbation of labour shortages.

In the previous chapters, the history of cheap labour as a capital accumulation strategy, effected through the corporate and community citizenship of seafood processing workers in the area, was provided. As political and economic ideologies and subsequent policies and corporate strategies evolved under neoliberalism, seafood processing companies, including NB Cannery, Lobster Plant, and Multinational Fish Farm, became further entrenched, via mergers and acquisitions, within large multinational corporations, and via financialization processes, including, in the case of NB Cannery, became vulnerable to control by private equity companies. Corporate capitalism brought much change, but also some constants. Within this corporate structure, what was maintained was a drive for cheap wage labour, based on gender, race, and international divisions of labour that have eerily similar characteristics to historical methods of accessing and maintaining a cheap labour force, such as the Chinese contract labour used in British Columbia at the turn of the twentieth century (Muszynski 1996), or New Brunswick's business community tactics to weaken labour power early in the twentieth century (Nerbas 2008).

This chapter shows how current re-workings of old methods for manufacturing cheap labour have occurred through the manipulation of the work environment and the workforce in order to recreate a need for, and access to, cheap(er) labour in this area. Thus, this chapter answers why (and how), in an area of high unemployment, there have been sufficient labour shortages in seafood processing to allow employers to justify the use of the TFWP. Drawing predominantly on data from interviews I held with processing company management and workers, as well as local business owners, this chapter pieces

together an understanding of the changes in the local and interprovincial workforce and the reasons for them. These individuals provide nuanced understandings of large-scale data on work-related mobility and population demographics, and popular narratives of labour shortages, EI abuse, and youth apathy or disinterest that uncover the real-life complexity of labour supplies and capital gains in the current global economic context through focus on a localized site. The understandings and explanations provided by people participating in this study have been supported by the use of theoretical understandings of labour market processes, industrial space and place, and work-related geographic mobility (and immobility) within the larger rubric of feminist political economy. Found in this chapter are details on how recent labour composition came to be, the current experiences of workers within these plants, and the ramifications changes have had for workers' mobility and labour force composition.

The chapter begins with quantitative data on labour shortages and worker mobility into and out of NB and the region. This sets up the rest of the chapter, which explores in-depth, qualitative aspects of the labour shortage. Following this is a description of the composition of the current labour force in Oceanside seafood processing plants, including who is, and who is not, currently working in the plants, and what workers, employers and community members were saying in 2012 regarding the changes to the composition of the workforce, including the lack of youth, decreasing numbers of long-time loyal employees, and a loss of NL workers. Next, drawing from my data, explanations for these changes are explored. First I look at the dominant political narrative that identifies workers as the problem – specifically, that youth do not want to

do seafood processing-type work, and that NL workers, and seafood workers in general, are lazy and not loyal. Interview data on seasonal employment and its connection to EI changes is embedded within a discussion of the “lazy worker” narrative, and generates interesting contradictions related to how employers and employees complain of a lack of loyalty from each other. Second, I focus on structural explanations around the changes to work quality and work rhythms in the seafood processing plants, first in the aquaculture industry, and then the capture industry. This discussion centres on forced pay cuts, shift changes, and the loss of seasonal work in some plants. The specific impact of these changes on the interprovincial NL workforce is also discussed. I conclude this chapter with a broader conversation around what has changed in the last ten years in seafood processing in Oceanside, and possibly other areas in Canada dominated by seafood processing labour, that might contribute to the manufacturing of qualitative labour shortages in seafood processing (Sharma 2006). An inherent contradiction between work and life rhythm and corporate capitalism is explored within a discussion of why there are two separate narratives that explain labour shortages in seafood processing, and who benefits. This chapter complicates these narratives, by investigating who works, but also who is no longer working, in the seafood processing plants in Oceanside – and why.

## **7.2 A Quantitative Labour Shortage?**

Labour mobility in and out of NB has been a long-term trend throughout the province’s history.

**Table 7.1 Mobility of Workers in NB and NL, 2004–2009**

Year	# of employees who left NB to work	# of employees who came to NB to work	# of employees who left NL to work
2004	14,133	12,094	17,579
2005	16,485	13,069	19,481
2006	17,865	14,231	23,083
2007	19,648	14,763	25,047
2008	20,071	15,674	26,817
2009	17,106	14,636	22,473

Source: Statistics Canada 2013<sup>12</sup>

Looking at the data from the 2011 Census, we can see that from 2004 to 2009, more workers left NB to work than came into the province (except for in 2009 itself). For the same years, NL saw a steady increase in the number of employees who left to work in other provinces (Statistics Canada 2013). The population of the area of my study held steady between the years 1996 and 2001. At this time in the region, the aquaculture industry was a small-scale industry. From 2001 to 2011, the region experienced population decline. This coincided with the growing domination of one multinational aquaculture company, and the related layoffs and restructuring that occurred as the

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12. Data taken from table 1 (Provinces/territories receiving interprovincial employees, 2004–2009) and table 2 (Provinces/territories sending interprovincial employees, 2004–2009).

industry consolidated.

This period also coincided with the restructuring of NB Cannery and the takeover by a private equity company.

**Table 7.2 Area of Research Population 1996-2011**

	1996	2001	2006	2011
Population	27,335	27,336	26,898	26,549

(Statistics Canada 2011)

The continual outmigration that occurred, which may or may not be directly related to the restructured labour rhythms in the plants, or the decision to bring in migrant workers through the TFWP, does speak to the possible quantitative aspects of the labour shortage in the area. However, it does not explain why or how these labour shortages occurred.

### **7.3 Composition of the Labour Force in Seafood Processing in Oceanside in 2012**

Interviews with plant managers, but also with workers and community members, provided an understanding of the diversity of the seafood processing workforce in Oceanside in 2012. The workforce was comprised of domestic (both local, including a small local Vietnamese population, and interprovincial, mainly from NL) as well as international workers, recruited largely through the TFWP. Awareness of both the NL workers and workers from overseas, regardless of whether they were able to blend in with the local population, was quite high in the community, mostly due to the small population. This makes any newcomer visible. Thus, all community members I spoke with, whether or not they were connected to the seafood industry in some way, commented on labour change in the seafood processing plants and how it was reflected in

increased diversity in the community. For example, when I asked Patrick, Darren, and Shawn if they had noticed any changes to the seafood processing workforce, they replied:

***Patrick:** I am speaking more about [Multinational Fish Farm], but [NB Cannery] had done the same, every year they have Newfoundlanders that come and they also have Filipinos that come and I am sure there are other ethnicities, but, you know.*

***Darren:** There are a lot more people here. People that didn't grow up in the community. I think the first influx that you notice was Newfoundlanders were all here. And then, then it came everybody else from outside Canada that you ended up having here.*

***Shaun:** Yeah, I would say there has been some changes to the workforce. In some of the local processing facilities and that they have actually had trouble getting staff, and uh, they've tapped the overseas market for several, so there are people, first there are people that come down from NL that work down here, and even they come seasonally for various plants and that here, and there is, and they bring in foreign workers as well. Which is certainly unusual and if you go back fifteen, twenty years, there was none of that sort of thing.*

The changing composition of the labour force in seafood processing that has occurred over time in Oceanside was noted by both Darren and Shaun, who mention that the influx of immigrant workers (or visible immigrant workers) had occurred more recently, within the last twenty years. Sean not only noticed the change in the labour force in seafood processing, but provided reasons for it. Some interviewees attributed the labour shortage in the plants to a decrease in youth working in these plants; a lack of available local workers; a decrease in workers coming from NL; and, on occasion, a lack of work ethic in the local population, which was attributed to dependency on the EI system related to laziness, or to a desire to work only enough hours to be eligible for EI. The quotation below from Ryan is representative of this overall sentiment.

*Ryan: The other thing is, the aquaculture industry was reliant highly on Newfoundlanders to come and work in their fish plants, now what has happened is that the Newfoundlanders are no longer coming, so the workforce of Newfoundland has gone down, [and] to fill that gap the companies have looked abroad. That is another reason. . . . that Newfoundlanders is [sic] no longer coming . . . to have consistent employment, that they would have to engage people from abroad. The other problem is EI. Let's face it. It is a major problem in the fishing industry. And it don't fit aquaculture in some ways, in that the way our EI is structured is that you can work for a certain number of hours, and you can be off work and still collect a percentage of your benefits, uh, there is no active going back to work, or finding a job, or there is, or they say it on paper, but there is never any action, with a very little number of employers, many of them work around it too, to save them money, so that has created a whole system of life, the way people live, in the Maritime Provinces, so that can be another issue in terms of productivity, that is why the productivity is down in the fishing industry, and lets face it, the aquaculture and the fishing industry is not the best place to work, the environment is cold, the weight can, the weight of the fish can be heavy, and not everybody's health allows them to work in such a field, is it somebody, most of the time, generally speaking it's people who can't find another job and are forced to work in [this industry], that's just a personal opinion.*

Ryan recognizes that seafood processing work has developed a way of life, rhythm, or “system of life,” which has become “the way people live, in the Maritime Provinces.”

Ryan’s understanding of the labour shortage in seafood processing is framed within a larger narrative about seafood processing workers that exists in our media and our government (CBC News 2014c), but that is complicated by interview data that presents a narrative of decreasing work quality in the seafood processing plants.

#### **7.4 Two Narratives of Labour Shortages in Seafood Processing**

Dominant narratives about seafood processing workers include notions that seafood processing, because it is deemed low-skilled work, and does not require a person to have higher education (or, in most cases, even high school education) to get hired, is an easy place to get a job. Workers on EI are thus perceived as a problem (i.e lazy and disloyal,

especially youth) and EI reliance/abuse contribute to a labour shortage in the industry. However, a second narrative emerged from interview data that includes notions that the work environment in seafood processing plants is changing significantly. These changes include decreased hours, reduced control over shifts and breaks, and lower pay, and, for the NL workers, decreased seasonal work and seniority, all of which have contributed to a significant decrease in seasonal workers from NL coming to work in the plants. I will look at this narrative in the next section. The current section looks at the dominant narrative more closely, beginning with the notion that youth no longer want to work in seafood processing.

#### ***7.4.1 Loss of Youth in Seafood Processing***

One of the most common narratives provided by those I spoke with regarding the lack of a local labour force was that young people do not want to work in seafood processing anymore. Managers' comments on the lack of youth in fish processing indicated the belief that young people want to work in high-skilled, knowledge-based occupations (and thus not in seafood processing), or that young people do not want to work for minimum wage anymore. Regardless of why managers thought young people no longer wanted to work in the plants, they all noted that youth were instead moving west to work.

*Belinda: I think a lot of younger people getting out of high school and that sort of thing, from this area, I think they are moving out west. So you're not getting a lot of real young people coming into the industry.*

*Carrie: Um, the younger generation, or the younger generation that's coming into the workforce you know, they are more knowledge based individuals, so there generally striving to having a lot of challenges, and that sort of thing, so you know one of the challenges that we do face is that many of our jobs are very repetitive, they're low skill like I said, and so it's hard to keep them attracted to this type of work, so that certainly is a challenge that we face at this particular*

*time, and something that we've seen occurring in the last ten years.*

***Andrew:** The younger Newfoundland people would rather go to Fort McMurray than [Oceanside] for \$11 dollars an hour, and I can't blame them for that. So once again, that's another thing that makes it more and more difficult for, let's say, for us to hire, so, the Temporary Foreign Worker Program actually has really been a godsend to us.*

It is interesting to note that while Carrie connects the lack of youth working in the plant with a lack of desire to do the work that seafood processing entails, she associates that with a very recent change, occurring only in the last ten years. This poses the question of what has changed in the last ten years. I investigate this further in the discussion section at the end of this chapter. One thing that has changed is the increasing use of the TFWP, which Andrew states is a “godsend,” because migrant workers coming in through the TFWP are seemingly fine with working for \$11.00 an hour, while young people in NB and NL are not. They would rather go west, where there is opportunity to make perhaps not more money per hour, but more money overall due to the availability of overtime.

It was not just managers who commented on the lack of youth in the seafood processing plants; workers made similar comments about young people not working in the fish plants, and instead going west:

***Krista:** So I guess a lot of them are going to go to Alberta, especially the young ones. You know older people, they don't want, they are not going to go unless they have a daughter or a son out there and they can go out with them.*

***Susan:** They're coming and going all the time. I know [Multinational Fish Farm] has a really hard time keeping workers. But you bring a young person especially into a plant that works the way we work, very strenuous and stressful, they are not going to stay, they either go out west, or a lot go back to school.*

***Marnie:** There are less younger people, and more older people. A lot of people left, people who I wouldn't think would leave because of the situation. Some are going out west, or just working in a grocery store, or a convenience store,*

*because it's year-'round and you can actually work more.*

**Mary:** *Economically, I think they have really hurt the community, because a lot of locals, the majority of locals, will go west. Especially young people, because there is not a lot of jobs here. And the jobs that are here are*

**Interviewer:** *Go west to Alberta?*

**Mary:** *Yeah, and a lot of jobs. Well a lot of people are going to Saskatchewan. And a lot of people here don't want to make ten dollars an hour.*

These workers identify the decrease in youth in the plants, and some identify its connection to a lack of work quality and income that these jobs now offer in relation to the opportunity to move out west to work (upon which I expand below). These interview excerpts also talk about the general mobility in and out of the community due to the economic boom in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and its aged and gendered aspects, noting that is mostly young people, as well as men, who leave. Bell and Ward (2000) had similar findings in their study of how age affects mobility, showing that as people age, their work-related mobility, as well as permanent relocation, decrease.

Sally, Belinda, and Mandy speak about how gender and age play a role in migration out west:

**Sally:** *Everyone is leaving, there is like a lot of houses for sale now, I think everybody is just, I don't know, I think there's just not enough money anymore. \$12 an hour, people don't survive now. It's alright for me to make \$12 an hour because I have my husband's income too, but like for somebody, like single, the cost of living is so high, people can't make it on \$12 an hour. Because everybody is going out west. I know that this week there are six young boys that just left in the last two weeks, it's either that or you work with fish, what do you pick, right?*

**Belinda:** *I think because they're older people, or that age group I guess, a lot of them have decided not to move away because ... I think a lot of people have moved out west. Uh but I think that at that age, forty, forty-five, they're kinda settled, they've got their homes, probably raising kids here, and they just don't want to pack up and leave. And that is probably reflected of more ladies than men because some of these ladies, they decided to stay in the area, and maybe their husbands decided to go out west and work, and I am sure you've got some of*

*those situations as well.*

***Mandy:** But for now [these] people are what I call the working poor, they have enough to eat and they have clothes on their backs but they don't have a lot of disposable income, they have enough to get by, eke out a living and that is fine for some. But for young people it is not, they want all the bells and whistles, so that is why we get all the out migration, all the young going west. Pick up a telegraph and look in the classifieds and see how many jobs for this area, I can tell you right now, zip. But you will see six or seven looking for workers out west.*

Clearly, workers and managers identify the low-paid work in seafood processing as a significant factor in discouraging young people from taking up jobs, especially when there are opportunities to work in the prairie provinces. Mandy mentions the higher consumption patterns of youth, with young people wanting “all the bells and whistles.” Yet I do not think it is only young people who want “bells and whistles.” Higher consumption patterns may be more indicative of the influence of corporations and their advertising influence on people on a global scale. Higher consumption patterns may now, however, more so than in the past, conflict with minimum-wage jobs for workers’ purchasing power, which may make the processing occupations that much more unappealing.

Another deterrent may be the lack of recognition that seafood processing workers receive for the hard work that they do, as they are often labeled as lazy because of the sector’s association with EI dependency.

#### ***7.4.2 Employment Insurance and Seasonal Work: The “Lazy Worker” Narrative.***

Concerns over the changes to the EI program that came into effect in January 2013 were raised by many people I interviewed, especially in relation to the seasonal workers in the capture seafood processing plants who still relied on the EI program to manage their

established work/life rhythm and to earn enough to survive. Marnie, who works at NB Cannery, chose to work in seafood processing, because seasonality offers her time to spend with her children. Due to the uncertainty with hours and shifts that has been occurring in the plants, Marnie works as hard as she can on her shift to make the most money possible during the season.

***Interviewer:** Have you ever thought of leaving?*

***Marnie:** Yes I have, but this is what keeps us there, people like me, it's time off. When I do work, I make a lot of money, like on Sunday I had to work really hard because I don't know how many days I'll work, so I had to work my rear end off, I made \$254 dollars in ten hours. If I make four days in a row, and I get that cheque, you can pay your bills, and it's not reliable, I am getting unemployment, and that's not the greatest either, but you also have the time off in March, April, May to spend with your kids.*

Marnie, like many other workers in seafood processing, especially those engaged in E-RGM from NL, work where they do because of the ability it affords them to take time off. The idea that someone would *not* want to work, or would only want to work part of the year, has been equated with laziness, and, as such, people who use the EI program are usually vilified to some degree. For example, the late Jim Flaherty, who was Conservative Minister of Finance in 2012, was quoted in the media saying, “There is no bad job. The only bad job is not having a job” (Jim Flaherty, in Curry 2012). The idea that there is “no bad job” is reflective of the idea that specific members of our current workforce, many of whom are youth or seasonal workers, are not working simply because they do not want to work hard. Yet work in seafood processing *is* hard work, as the interview excerpts throughout this chapter can attest. More relevant is the fact that many seafood processing workers have done this work for years and have integrated a balance between working in seafood processing and having time off.

The impact of the “lazy worker” narrative on workers I interviewed came to light in how they talked about the work ethic of NL workers in relation to the reduction of the NL portion of the local workforce. My informants often singled out NL people as hard workers:

***Harry:** When I first started, there was a lot more people from NL that came looking for jobs. You know, hard-working people and good people to work with. Just, you know, needed the jobs.*

***Kim:** There was always a lot from NL and now I find that the NL people, I mean they are really hard workers.*

The friction that is occurring with seasonal workers seems to be more related to recent neoliberal-infused narratives of work ethic, that serve the needs of corporations over workers, and less related to the actual amount of work seasonal workers do. Reforms to the EI program, which are fueled by neoliberal conservative policies, directly affected workers, especially seasonal workers. In 2012, an omnibus bill, C-38, was introduced. Reforms to the EI program through an initiative labeled “Connecting Canadians with Available Jobs,” came into effect January 6, 2013. Changes included requiring repeat applicants to go greater distances to find work (within one hundred kilometers of their homes), and to accept jobs at lower pay relative to their regular jobs (at least seventy percent of their previous salary). EI applicants had to provide proof that they were actively looking for work, including work outside their occupational field, that paid less, or it did not offer good working conditions. In a CTV news story, Liberal MP Park Eyking stated, “There is just no rationale for the changes; at the end of the day, it is a complete attack on seasonal workers and small businesses” (CTV News 2013).

Workers I spoke to worried about how the EI program changes would work in terms of seafood processing. The issue was not only the potential for seasonal workers to end up with a bad job record when they are laid off from a seafood processing plant, try to find work elsewhere, and then quit that job to return to the seafood processing plant. There is also the issue that if a worker quits a job, he or she is unable to receive EI for six weeks, and receiving it requires a lot of paperwork. For example, if workers who would like to remain in seafood processing find employment, say, at Tim Horton's when the fish plant shuts down, and then want to return to the fish plant when it reopens, they will have to quit their job at Tim Horton's, which would then make them ineligible for EI. Bree and Peter talked about their concerns with the EI reforms in terms of having to find short-term jobs that, when they left them to go work in the NB Cannery, would make them ineligible for EI.

***Bree:** I am worried, too, if they changed the way seasonal workers can get unemployment, to me I am not a seasonal worker. I have lived at the same place for thirty-four years. Why should I have to be qualified as a seasonal worker just because somebody has to do that job? People eat sardines, if they classify me as a seasonal worker and put me under all kinds of constraints, and I get like three weeks off at Christmas time, I can't go work somewhere else for three weeks. First off I have to go and find a job, and secondly, any place that is really within my area to be able to travel to, they also know when [name of capture plant] is laying off, and they cut down on their staff, do you know what I mean? So, and we are laid off in the winter time, for another, I don't know, this winter we were laid off for four weeks, no, six weeks from the month of April to part of May, we were laid off, so that is like six weeks to try to go and work at another job, and who is going to take you to work for six weeks?*

***Peter:** Plus at that time there are a ton of other women trying to look for that same job as you're trying to get.*

***Bree:** Now there are some people who have part-time jobs, and they go and work at them, but they have an understanding. Like there are some women from [community close by] that work at the Superstore [grocery] or whatnot, but they are not packers, they are hourly workers, and they are called in when someone doesn't come in, they are called into Superstore when someone doesn't come into*

*work and they, places like the Superstore they get busier at Christmas, to make cakes and salads and all that crap, so they call them in, you know. But not everybody is like that, [Multinational Fish Farm] is not, and you're going to leave there, you're going to get a really bad-looking job record, I quit here, I quit there, and if you quit, you're not eligible for unemployment, you have to wait six weeks, you have to go through a rigmarole, I am going to go work at [Multinational Fish Farm] for six weeks while I'm laid off, and so I go and work for [Multinational Fish Farm], and [NB Cannery] starts back up, so I quit at [Multinational Fish Farm] 'cause I got to quit, so I go to [NB Cannery], and [NB Cannery] runs for two weeks and then, there is no work for two weeks, I can't get unemployment, because I quit at [Multinational Fish Farm].*

The specific difficulty that seasonal workers have had with trying to find alternative employment while laid off from their main employer is the ability to still be available to work when the plant starts operation again. The other issue is getting hired at a secondary place of employment when the employer knows you will be quitting at a moment's notice. This is a real problem with the EI program as it relates to the capture seafood processing industry, and may be a factor in getting hired back at the plants, as one plant manager, Carrie, when discussing the labour shortages in the industry in Oceanside, emphasized that they are looking for workers with good work histories.

*Carrie: Well it's been a bit of a challenge. I find that a lot of the challenges that we're facing is trying to find **employees that have good work history**, for one.*

The EI reforms are seemingly working to help create a labour shortage in this area, a concern further supported by my discussion with Mandy. Mandy argued that the changes to EI are unrealistic for the resource-based rural area where she lives, and that government largely missed the boat on the impact that these changes would have on seasonal workers.

*Mandy: So it's a larger issue than what we are led to believe and I really resent the fact that they put everything under this omnibus bill without proper debate*

*and scrutiny, and it's just another knife in the back of working poor as far as I am concerned. Because those that I call my people, really the working poor, they get by, you know, they have a half decent home, not a bad car, but nobody is rich, you know, no one's affluent, wearing fur coats, eating out every night, they are just working poor. And I am sure that is the same kind of people that are coming from other places to work here... In real terms, because of the availability of fish, the uncertainty of the availability, and the frequent layoffs, people need money. In January, with the new EI regulation, they are going to impact the ones that regularly apply for EI like my people. So what you are going to have, there is a clause that you have to accept a job [at] seventy percent of the wage that you were currently last working, so that means a minimum wage job, any minimum wage job, so we are going to have my people driving to [community half an hour away] or [community an hour away] to work at Tim Horton? Whatever, and the costs and that will supersede the cost of gas, the cost of car maintenance, day care problems, because you have to drop your kids off an hour earlier and pick them up an hour later, and that's if you have good road conditions, and with our weather and stuff. I am afraid of mass exodus really. Either people will go and get retrained, or go to jobs, if they are going to work ten-hour jobs then they might as well stay up there rather than spending \$500 a month on gas, plus another \$200–\$300 on tires and oil changes, and anyone with an older model car it won't take long for those problem to manifest themselves. People with new cars that have to keep an eye on their mileages, they will suffer as well. And yes, there is something to be said that you can carpool or whatever, that is if you get a group of four, six all working at McDonalds for the same hours or on the same spectrum. You know it wasn't that long ago, that the federal government, that the auditor general, reviewed the employment insurance and found that there was so much surplus money and that it was almost bordering on criminal, this was five years ago, there was so much surplus and the government was trying to balance out other departments or something like that, and the auditor general called an inquiry, so in five years I can't image that has been depleted, and yet they are taking money off the backs of my hard working tax payers here, to fund this program that makes it more and more difficult to access, well if they don't want seasonal workers, then they can figure out how to grow a lobster in downtown Toronto, or to grow a forest, when they can figure out how to plant them trees in the city, so everyone can go and cut them. You know there are certain things that just don't make sense by the very nature of their existence, like the forestry and the fishery, and they are subject to her conditions like weather. Or whatever. They are sitting up there in Ottawa, with their heads in their asses; they do not have a clue. And then Diane Finley [Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Program] did her big consultation tour, but she never once came, not even to [name of county] to talk to people here, where there is a mass population that really would have benefitted from hearing from her, but she snuck around up in [another county] and in the cities, where seasonal EI is not predominant. But like I said, aquaculture pretty much works year round, but our traditional fishery, which are*

*the backbone of NB, when you think about our lobster and our shellfish components, as well as the nature of our dulce, the rockweed, the blood worms, there is need for all of this stuff, you can't find it on Bloor and Young, you know what I mean. So if Diane Finley really wants to talk about EI reform, and its impacts, then she should get off her ass and come down to [name of county], I would be happy to show her around and straighten her out on a few things.*

Mandy's words raise a considerable number of important points. Among these are the fact that these reforms to EI are further harming people who are just getting by as it is, and that forcing workers to accept jobs that pay seventy percent of what they usually make is a government policy that contributes to the creation of cheap labour. As well, reforms forcing workers to engage in extended commutes to work at jobs that pay less than they usually make have a significant impact on people's work/life rhythms, requiring them to spend more time away from family and children and to incur significantly more costs in terms of things like childcare, travel costs and car maintenance; they also increase OHS risks, due to bad weather conditions that impact the risk of driving. Potential solutions to some of these high costs, such as carpooling, are extremely difficult with the current just-in-time shift schedules in service jobs, which no longer contain regular routine hours, especially ones that would match up with other people's, or even families' and children's, regular life rhythm.

The EI reforms are also shocking given the surplus that had accumulated in the program by 2007. The federal government conducted a consultation tour before the reforms were implemented, but did not visit areas in NB where seasonal EI is prominent. Finally, seasonal work is seasonal because of the resource upon which it is based, which not only holds historic but ecological significance, as "you can't find it on Bloor and Young," and it is tied to seasons, and thus to rhythms: rhythms of the earth, of the

species, of work effort, and of life outside of work.

#### **7.4.3 *The Loss of the Loyal Worker – or Loss of the Loyal Company?***

A rhythm mismatch is intensifying between workers and new corporate capital neoliberal employment policies and work environments, and this is playing a role in manufacturing labour shortages in the seafood processing industry. One way this is manifesting is in narratives around loss of loyalty. Both plant managers and workers used the term *loyalty*, often in an ironic way, as managers often complained that they no longer had loyal workers, whereas workers spoke of long-time colleagues either quitting because of poor work quality or being fired.

The managers talked a lot about good workers, or loyal workers. This came up in interviews when managers talked about the increase in the number of workers from overseas in the plant, and the lack of a similar workforce locally. Important to this discussion is the need expressed by management for loyal workers, and the conflicting narrative from workers, as well as community members, of loyal workers being forced out of the plant due to increasingly difficult work environments. The following two quotations exemplify these conflicting narratives.

*Carrie: What we have learned from other employers in the community is that employees from foreign countries, they are eager for any work whether it is repetitive type of work, factory setting, it doesn't matter to them. They want the work, they want as many hours as they can [get]. The loyalty is there, the dedication is there, and that is something that we face on a regular basis locally, is finding that dedication, finding that commitment, you know. They are looking for their hours, and that's it.*

*Marnie: When I first started, it seemed like the managers cared more about the employees. The other bosses that were there before, they cared about the employee, like, I don't know, if we had concerns about shortages of fish, they would, they seemed to communicate with us more, and care about, that we do*

*have lives too and it ain't just about the dollar amount. Now, we were sold I don't know how many times. Up until this last company bought us, everything remained the same – it was just good work, you know, we weren't stressed about losing our jobs. You know when this company took over, big changes happened. Right after Christmas they fired, oh my god, fifteen I say, maintenance, fired all kinds of people, for reasons I don't know. People who were loyal to the company from day one. . . . We are all [over] a barrel. We all feel like . . . people are only at [plant name] right now because they have to be. And before, it was being loyal to the company. There was people, like a guy I know, he just retired. He was there sixty years. That's a long time, but he was devoted to the company, but he had to leave. It's just stress. It went from good to bad in [snaps fingers]. They don't care about us, they don't care about nothing. It's stressful every day I go there.*

It seems apparent from the interviews that loyalty means different things under different corporate structures. Under a paternal, company-town model, there was more recognition of the need for the workers to get their hours, so they could qualify for EI in the off season, so that they would remain available to the company when the season started up again. Thus the EI system worked in favour of the company as well as the worker, as each was able to count on the other. Loyalty, under a new corporate capital model, seems to mean that being available for work is not just a seasonal thing, but a year-'round, just-in-time, as-needed work model that conflicts with other life rhythms around which these workers have structured their lives.

There is a dominant, neoliberal-tinged narrative that young people and people who use EI are lazy, and purportedly not good or loyal workers, and this is why they are no longer working in seafood processing plants. But my data also uncovered another possible factor that might explain why many people do not work in seafood processing plants. The reason is that their friends and family tell them not to. For example, when I asked workers in the plants in NB whether they would recommend their job to friends and family, their first response was always no.

**Interviewer:** *Would you encourage your friends and families to work in the plant?*

**Rena:** *Now?*

**Interviewer:** *Yeah.*

**Rena:** *No.*

**Interviewer:** *Okay, why not?*

**Rena:** *They are terrible to work for now. They really are terrible. Terrible.*

**Interviewer:** *Would you encourage your friends and family to work there?*

**Bree:** *No, because I don't think it's going to last. It lasted my husband, and it might last me, maybe, I don't really care if it shuts down, I could go get a part-time job or I don't know, but we would probably be okay, but I would not encourage anyone now to start and depend on it for a lifetime's work like we did, because I don't think it's going to last. I am just afraid that it's not. It may, but I don't think there is any surety to it anymore. I really don't. I, not like there used to be. Really not.*

**Interviewer:** *Would you encourage your friends and family to work there?*

**Susan:** *No, because of the changes, because it feels like there is no respect for the employees, it feels like we are just a number now. The people that's running it, there is only one person that's from, that is, family I guess, to us. That is the guy that buys the fish. And the rest are really strangers. I don't know. It's just not the same.*

These workers talk about the overall erosion of the work as they knew it, and also the increasing risk of plant closure. Susan speaks of the degradation of the work environment culminating in her no longer feeling like a person or a valued employee, but “just a number now.” If workers are no longer enjoying their work and feeling underappreciated, or if they feel that the plant may close soon, they are not likely to encourage young people to make a career of this work.

One young worker, Nicole, who was working in seafood processing when I interviewed her, echoed the sentiment that seafood processing plants were not “good” places to work. She was not planning on staying in seafood processing in the long term, because she felt that the work was exploitative and underpaid for the effort expended:

*Interviewer: Do you like the job enough to work there in five years from now, ten years from now?*

*Nicole: No, I wouldn't do that for the rest of my life. No I would never work in seafood. It's hard on ya. You know I see these old women, fifty, sixty years old, that really shouldn't be there, they are too old to be in a fish plant. They should be home, you know, relaxing, and I just can't see myself that old wanting to do something like that. It's wrong. I think fish plants are wrong. It's like children sweat shops if you ask me. You're not getting paid anything for what you're doing. You're working really hard and you're not getting paid for it. You get paid by the hour, not how hard you work.*

Nicole mentions that she feels the way the plants are run is exploitative. A key part of what makes seafood processing less attractive to workers now is the switch in payment method from piecework to hourly wages. It seems that low numbers of young people working in seafood processing may have less to do with a disinclination to work hard, than with them being deterred by negative recommendations regarding these jobs, coinciding with the option to work out west if they are able.

During interviews, workers who have made seafood processing their career discussed the deteriorating working conditions within seafood processing, both in aquaculture and in the capture plants in Oceanside. The decreasing quality of work and working conditions contributed to manufacturing a labour shortage not only among young people, but also among local and NL workers who had organized their lives around seasonal employment.

### **7.5 Changing Work Quality in Seafood Processing Plants in Oceanside**

Much of my interview data covered the changes to the work quality and seasonality of the seafood processing industry in Oceanside. Workers and managers provided explanations of how and why seasonal changes have occurred in the industry, as well as

the decreasing work quality within the plants. The changes in aquaculture and capture plants' work quality and work rhythm included pay cuts, shift changes, loss of overtime, difficulty getting pay raises, and the decreasing numbers of workers coming from NL to work in the plants. These changes within the seafood processing plants were associated with corporate changes within the industry, effected either through mergers and consolidation, or new ownership. In the capture processing plants, especially, these changes resulted in heightened anxiety due to the increased risk of termination for Canadian workers. Therefore, seafood processing was not discussed favorably, or as Susan stated, “[I]t's not a job that 's nice”:

***Susan:** I know a lady that was making \$35 an hour six or seven years ago, she used to work beside me, she went back to school, and she's almost forty, because it was so frustrating and you didn't know if you were going to have your job from one minute to the next and a lot of people left. They just couldn't handle, it's not a job that's nice.*

While it could be argued that seafood processing was never a “nice job,” it existed in the community as a sure source of work. Seafood processing is hard work, and the work environment is not the most desirable. Generations of families, however, built their lives around seafood processing in Oceanside, establishing work/life rhythms that aligned with the established rhythm of the fish stocks, allowing for periods of intense, hard work during the work season, and also allowing a break and time to spend with their families and/or to recuperate during the off season. Thus seasonality, the ability to work and then to *not* work, has always been a part of what workers enjoyed, or why they chose to stay employed in seafood processing. The aquaculture industry has gotten rid of seasonal employment in its plants (to a degree), and it was also the main aquaculture company,

Multinational Fish Farm, that first reduced wages in seafood processing in Oceanside.

### ***7.5.1 Aquaculture: Reduced Pay and Loss of Seasonal Employment = Labour Shortage***

Interviewees I spoke with who worked or had worked in seafood processing discussed how negative changes to work quality led to increasing labour shortages in the aquaculture industry through pay decreases, scheduling and shift changes, and the loss of the seasonal work rhythm. The two aquaculture companies located in Oceanside offer very different work environments and wages. While one is much smaller than the other, it pays higher wages, has no labour shortage issues, and is respected by workers and community members. In comparison, it was the large conglomerate aquaculture company that first reduced wages, cheapening labour in the area.

*George: The wages have definitely come down from where they were. . . . I would say that if you looked back at absolute dollars in the nineties, if you looked at the average wage back say in 1990, versus where it is today, they are either the same or today's lower.*

Pay cuts began with the initial buyout of the majority of aquaculture businesses in the area by Multinational Fish Farm. These were then amalgamated and merged along with the local labour force. This occurred through the closing of all plants, followed by the relocation of a majority of the processing work to two processing plants, and then the rehiring of workers at a reduced wage.

*Mary: There was net mending plants, there was, all these jobs were here anyway, uh, [Multinational Fish Farm] has simply purchased them. Purchased them and lowered the rates, or lowered the wages. When they first took over a long time ago, they laid a lot of people off. Laid a lot of people off and then wanted to hire them back for five dollars an hour less. And a lot of the workers said FU and they were out of here. And at the time, managers or whatever said, white people don't want to work here, fine, we won't hire them. And after that a lot of the foreigners were brought in. Because they could not get people to work here. Because they bought all these companies out. Laid everyone off, they did, they made no bones*

*about it. They laid everyone off and lowered wages.*

Thus the forced pay cut had immediate consequences for labour mobility and labour change in the plant itself, but also in Oceanside, as it is plausible that many workers left to go west, and, as noted by Mary, an international workforce came in. The initial reduction of wages Mary described has been maintained by Multinational Fish Farm, which pays the lowest wages in the region out of the four processing plants, despite its significant growth (outlined in chapter 6) and prosperity. It pays minimum wage as the starting rate, with very slow pay increases. Workers who worked at the Multinational Fish Farm, as well as those who had considered working there, knew that the concession was low pay:

*Kim: Uh, [Multinational Fish Farm] you get good benefits, but you're starting at like \$10.91 an hour. And I don't like that at all. You're working too hard to make that kind of money.*

*Interviewer: Do you get overtime?*

*Nicole: Yeah, if they give it to you, but I think you have to work more than fifty hours or something. And you're working what, forty-five, forty-six, forty-seven, forty-eight hours. You'll never get it, really. But the other aquaculture company, it's after forty-five hours you're getting it, so it's not so bad. . . . I mean [Multinational Fish Farm], you have to work at [Multinational Fish Farm] for five, six, seven years to make \$14 an hour, you start at [small fish farm] and make \$13.90 something and you work there for three months and you're getting \$14 something an hour, it's just a little different.*

*Interviewer: But you would have no problem going over to [Multinational Fish Farm]?*

*Marnie: If I had to.*

*Interviewer: Do you think your pay would be about the same?*

*Marnie: No, it would be less. It would be a lot less.*

*Interviewer: Okay, What about pay? Are you happy with how much you make?*

*Mary: No, that's the only issue I have with it. And I think it's the area.*

*Interviewer: Okay, why is that?*

*Mary: Well, a lot of the larger companies have the price low, we moved from*

*Nova Scotia and we noticed a big decline in pay. There is a lot of, I honestly just believe it's the area we're in and the type of work that is here.*

**Interviewer:** *Is it minimum wage that you start at?*

**Mary:** *Yeah, well, most start just below, just above minimum wage. And that's just not, yeah. . . .*

**Interviewer:** *Can you move up in pay?*

**Mary:** *You can, it's just not, uh, if you get twenty-five cents a year, it's like, YAY!*

**Interviewer:** *Do people leave [NB Cannery] and go to [Multinational Fish Farm]*

**Bree:** *Not very many people,*

**Interviewer:** *Does [Multinational Fish Farm] pay better?*

**Bree:** *No, they pay 'way less.*

**Interviewer:** *So it would be like any other minimum wage job?*

**Bree:** *Yes, and they work really odd shifts, they work, like if you work at [Multinational Fish Farm] you've got to shift off, like one week you're going to work days and one week you're going to work nights. You know what I mean, yeah, it's a lot of shifts, and they are not routine. Well, they switched, I am not sure how exactly they do it at [Multinational Fish Farm]. They are still really lax with breaks and stuff at [NB Cannery], they are. Like for instance, we'd work on the weekend, they'd allow me to take smoke breaks on the weekend because it's the weekend, I don't think [Multinational Fish Farm] does that. Also [Multinational Fish Farm] works like twelve-hour shifts and we don't, there was a big racket when we had to do ten hours. And at [Multinational Fish Farm], they don't ask you if you want to stay, they tell you that you have to stay, so you might go into work at ten in the morning and you might not get out until one o'clock [in the morning]. And a lot of people don't want to do that.*

Thus workers identified in the interviews that compared to NB Cannery, the Multinational Fish Farm processing plant not only paid less, it took longer to grant wage increases, had shifts that were both longer (twelve hours versus ten) and offered fewer opportunities for breaks, and gave workers less control over whether or not to work overtime.

Also identified by interviewees was the impact the Multinational Fish Farm had on the workforce in terms of the loss of the seasonal rhythm of work in the aquaculture industry. This is often touted as an improvement to labour and communities, because it

provides almost year-‘round employment versus six to nine months of employment a year. This switch, however, also contributed to a loss of the surplus labour force, or the reserve army of labour, many of whom came from NL, but some of whom were also local workers choosing seasonal occupations in order to help balance their other responsibilities, such as childcare. The decrease in seasonal work in seafood processing within aquaculture is a significant change in the rhythm of resource-based labour in the fishery. This seemed to deter workers who, aside from having designed their lives around this work mode – sometimes for generations – may also have had to commute long distances, such as the NL workers.

Managers in aquaculture companies explained how the rhythmic change of harvesting and processing in this industry from seasonal to year-‘round production, which negated the need for a seasonal reserve army of labour during peak production periods, contributed to the decline in NL workers. When this shift occurred, many workers in aquaculture from NL had to find work in other plants, chose to stay permanently in NB, or did not come at all. In the following interview excerpt, Jacob describes how the aquaculture industry shifted from seasonal to year-round production and also shifted its workforce requirements from the previous need for a reserve army during peak production times to requiring a constant, year-round, just-in-time supply of workers:

**Interviewer:** *Is it seasonal, the work, or is it year-‘round?*

**Jacob:** *It’s year-‘round.*

**Interviewer:** *And in the previous plant, was it the same? Was it year-‘round?*

**Jacob:** *Yup, now with the other plant there would be what we called a gap between generations, so we would finish up one generation of fish and the other, the next generation may not be ready to go, what I mean by that is that they may not be up to market size. So sometimes there was a number of weeks where there wasn’t any work. And here that is not the case, here you go year-‘round.*

**Interviewer:** *Okay. So the workers that come from NL, do they live here full-time then?*

**Jacob:** *Yup.*

**Interviewer:** *So they don't go back and forth?*

**Jacob:** *Nope, it's like any kind of production scheme, whether it's cars or whatever, you need so many workers to do so much product and you need them here all the time. So most of the people now, and what you hit on is exactly right, a few years ago there used to be people who would come here to work and they would get enough stamps for unemployment and go on home. And that wasn't such an issue back then because it was seasonal work, more or less, but now it's full-time work, the production numbers are far above what they used to be, and we need people, you know, if they want to come here to work, the idea is to work permanent full-time.*

**Interviewer:** *Okay, so workers relocate here then?*

**Jacob:** *They relocate here, yes.*

**Interviewer:** *But that was different in your other plant? You had the workers coming from – would they be living in NL still and then coming to stay here for a short time?*

**Jacob:** *Some, some would and again, even with the other plant it changed over time. But ten years ago, yeah, they would, sometimes they wouldn't even bring their families, they would come over, work for the winter and then go home, you know. In the last five to six years that wasn't the case because they just had to have the people that were going to stay.*

With these changes, workers become part of a “production scheme” (as Jacob mentions) that is linked to new modes of corporate capitalism that do not fit with seasonal employment. This switch in the rhythm of production was behind the loss of part of the workforce coming from NL.

The benefits of participating in this form of long-distance commuting were, for these NL workers, the ability to work and keep a connection to their home community. Jane provides some insight into why the year-‘round employment now required by aquaculture plants (despite the fact that in actuality they do have peak production times, as mentioned by the managers in chapter 6) restricts these plants as potential employers for the seasonal commuters:

**Interviewer:** *Did you guys ever work in aquaculture?*

**Jane:** *No, see, we looked into [Multinational Fish Farm] but they don't lay off. You work all year-'round. They don't lay off, so that defeats the purpose, because what do we do with our home here, and I don't want to be away. All my family is here, I do not want to move at our age outside of Newfoundland now.*

**Interviewer:** *Some people have done that, though, haven't they, some Newfoundlanders?*

**Jane:** *Oh yeah, yup. Twenty years ago, I probably would have done it. But not now.*

Jane and her husband's choice to make the long commute biannually is directly connected to being able to stay home, at least part of the time, but it is also tied to where they are in their life cycle, as she states that if she were younger, she might have considered making a permanent move to NB.

In my BC field research, the managers in aquaculture complained of difficulty finding workers, while managers in capture plants had a ready and willing workforce. Yet for both of these workforces, long commutes and long, hard days are part and parcel of the job. Therefore, doing it full-time on a permanent basis might be not just unappealing, but difficult, if not impossible, for some to sustain. Current workers, as well as one former worker who could only handle it for a couple of days, describe some of the difficult aspects of this work.

**Interviewer:** *Um, have you ever worked in seafood processing?*

**Mandy:** *Uh, yes, once, for two days. I didn't have the stamina to do it.*

**Veronica:** *It's not pleasant work, you know. I had two friends that worked in [aquaculture] processing plants, they are both gone now, it just sounded hellish. I know that when the sea lice outbreak was really bad, it was disgusting, the fish was coming in and there was chunks out of them, and they were half-eaten, but still alive. It's hard work, it's cold, it's loud, people are fighting in there all the time. There was some guy killed at the [aquaculture] plant. It's kinda of tough work.*

**Susan:** *I've seen so much change that it's overwhelming. And when we are working, we work hard. And it's such a physically demanding job and then, I don't want to knock the government, but they start saying about seasonal workers, and that's all we know.*

**Bree:** *I have never had carpal tunnel so I don't know, some people get it. You wouldn't believe some of the stuff that people work with down there. Like you were talking about working through the pain. I did it lots of times, and there were lots and lots of people who do. People break out from the fish, like they are allergic to it, and they wear these great big [motions with hands to show how covered the workers' arms are], they will do everything that they can to stop, to make sure that they are [protected], but they will still work. You know, they'll still work. There are some people who can barely walk and they still will, my friend, my good friend [name of friend], she can hardly walk. I don't think people realize how hard people work, and we don't, we don't choose to be laid off, I am not saying we don't enjoy it because we work hard, but we don't choose to be laid off, it's the circumstance of our job, it's a job, someone's got to do it.*

**Renee:** *And it was a hard job, I mean that's, I don't care what anybody says, it's a hard job. When they took our breaks away from us, I went to the boardroom. They were having a meeting, someone said, we are not supposed to tell you but they are having a meeting, so we all decided to go. And he said, "Well if you don't like it, go find a job somewhere else." I said, "Why don't you go down and try that job for a couple of days and see how you like it? Really, go try it. See if you can do it."*

Seasonal employment in seafood processing meant that workers only endured this kind of work for part of the year, and in exchange got part of the year off. For many workers, as described above, this offered a chance for their bodies to heal, but also gave them time to spend time with their children, and in the case of the NL workers, to go home to their houses, communities and families. The loss of seasonal employment in aquaculture means this no longer occurs.

While the large multinational aquaculture company lowered wages and increased the level of productivity, as well as its use of just-in-time labour (by only hiring local workers), one thing aquaculture processing employment does offer is benefits (although

minimal), and, more significantly, stability in terms of long-term viability. No one is threatening to close the plant down, which, for some workers, is worth the pay cut.

*Jane: [O]ne friend of mine went to [Multinational Fish Farm], but I heard a lot of people say this year when we left that they are going to be applying to [Multinational Fish Farm], because [NB Cannery] is too, it's not stable.*

*Kim: We need the aquaculture, otherwise we would have nothing. Yeah, we would have no business, its gonna be a ghost town in here. Honestly, 'cause that is the main livelihood of a lot of people. If [Multinational Fish Farm] shut down, most of the [Oceanside] people would have no job.*

The next section looks at how the depreciation of wages occurred in the other major employer in Oceanside, NB Cannery. For workers in that plant, who are historically tied to the company and the town, the recent takeover by a second private equity firm had, at the time of the study, created a work environment rife with stress, anxiety, and uncertainty that made working there both undesirable and inadvisable.

### **7.5.2 Decreased Work Quality in the Capture Plants = Labour Shortage**

Multinational Fish Farm was the first company to reduce wages and bring in a cheaper workforce from overseas willing to work at the reduced rate. Current changes to the labour force at NB Cannery, tied to the takeover of the company by a second private equity firm, have resulted in worsening working conditions. This section focuses on the changes to the work environment at NB Cannery that have reduced worker autonomy and increased stress levels, and have ultimately led to many workers leaving. These include increasing mechanization and a forced pay cut. The interview quotes in this section also link the degradation of work at NB Cannery to a degradation of NB Cannery's historically prominent role in the community.

### 7.5.2.1 The Business Point of View

The takeover of NB Cannery by a second private equity firm in 2008 had been a negative experience for the workers I spoke with directly, and also for those from whom I heard second-hand, via other community members who had friends or family working in the plants.

**Kim:** *They think that [NB Cannery] is going to shut it [the plant] down. That's what they're worried about. And the [NB Cannery] don't give a shit, all they care is they got? the profit this year. They are thinking **the business point of view**.*

**George:** *Yeah, my father-in-law for example, he's sixty, and he's worked there for thirty-five years, and he had to leave, he was planning to work there till he was sixty-five, but he couldn't stand it anymore. And that's a norm down there. And for a guy that's been there for thirty years, he's probably put up with the ups and downs over the years right, so that tells me that they are not doing a very good job if they are scaring people away.*

**Felicity:** *I think, now, [NB Cannery] use to be a really big contributor to the community; they are not so much now. I don't even know if they are called [NB Cannery] anymore. They have changed. They have gotten rid of a lot of employees.*

**Susan:** *Yeah, I think I could go on for hours about that. It's changed dramatically in the last five years, really dramatically. And it's changed so much it's like they took our soul.*

**Interviewer:** *So are you guys making your hours, then?*

**Susan:** *Like I am at an age that I just cannot do everything, so. Anyway, yeah, no one's getting hours. You have to do both shifts just to get your hours. And some of them are working till 11:30 at night. I can't get . . . and they are getting up and coming to work the next day. Like in the morning and start. And I don't know how they are doing it.*

**Jane:** *And the management of this company, and I can tell you now, and if they were here I would say the same thing. They are brutal. I have worked in fish processing for thirty-five years, and I have never ever seen a company treat the employees the way this company treats them. If you go to the head guy, and you uh, and you had a problem, it was like, deal with it, or out the door. And he would literally say it.*

**Interviewer:** *Really? And he would do it, too?*

*Jane: Oh yes. They didn't care. And everybody felt it, too. Everyone started feeling it last year when they took over that company. Because I think [name of American seafood company/American Seafood], and it's the third company since we've been there. Yup. Well, this is the worst.*

Specific changes to the workplace have included shift changes, loss of hours, increased job flexibility and responsibility (in part due to the recent layoffs), and increased mechanization. In 2012 during fieldwork, the plant had spent a lot of money on a machine the employees called the Hermasa. It had replaced the scissor packers, who traditionally did piecework, and could make a lot of money, depending on how hard they worked. But working on the Hermasa would now mean being paid an hourly wage, and also mean working in tandem with a group of other people; thus all workers would have to go at the same rate of production in order not to throw the others off.

*Renée: They eliminated a lot of their scissor packing down there too. So it's more of the machines now. It's Hermasa, like there is two Hermasa lines now, and they even changed the snack line. There was probably, let's see, eighteen girls that worked on snack line and they only have three.*

*Bree: Technology has changed so much in the plant, too. A lot more machines, a lot more, a lot. We only have like one scissor packer line, where we used to have four, and they used to turn people away, everyday, and now they are crying for people to work there, they are.*

The company reportedly invested \$12 million (\$3 million of which came from the provincial government) with the promise of maintaining the current workforce at 1,000 employees, as stated in a CBC news article, “[Name of company] is investing \$12 million into the last sardine processing operation left in North America in a move that will save roughly 1,000 jobs but abandon its traditional canning methods” (CBC News 2010). The workforce in 2012 was down to 750 and the introduction of the machine will ultimately decrease the workforce further. The Hermasa machine is replacing both the hand packers,

or scissor packers, as well as workers who work on the S.A.P machines, which were brought in about twenty years ago to aid workers (almost all women) in cutting and packing the herring. Jane and Ralph discuss the new Hermasa machine:

*Jane: Oh my god, yes. Even [NB Cannery] this year, they brought in, actually they paid in the millions for a machine and they didn't get it working*

*Ralph: They lost their shirts.*

*Jane: Big time, big time.*

*Ralph: They were trying to cut down[on] the workers, saying they were thirty workers, [and] for this machine they cut it to six people. They ended up with, I say, twice as many. So they had the six people that they thought they were going to get away with, [and] I spent a lot of time down there repacking.*

*Jane: Repacking. Because last year, say they had eight here putting it on the belt. Then they had fifteen in the middle manually putting it in the can, right? Then it would just go through. Then they took all that machinery out and they brought in this new piece that, they bought it from Denmark somewhere. Anyway, the guys were over the whole summer, the whole summer, and then they went home. That was enough. The whole summer. And now they ended up with six up here instead of eight. The fifteen in the middle that was putting it in the cans neat and tidy and going through good, now they got about twenty people repacking what those six are doing; it was totally, totally bizarre, wasn't it? And they kept it up the whole summer, they kept running it like that the whole summer.*

*Ralph: They just couldn't get the weight in the cans. The machine, the card that comes out, puts in the cans (slaps hand down) right.*

*Jane: See, people judge it better than the machine.*

*Ralph: The machine was either overweight or underweight.*

*Jane: I'd say if one can went down the belt out of forty right, the rest came off reject.*

*Interviewer: So you've got all those people repacking all those cans?*

*Ralph: You got, say, six women there and six up there, or eight there and six up there, they would be behind at six o'clock in the evening, and have to stay an extra three hours to finish it off. They wasn't gaining.*

*Jane: No, they lost their shirt on that machine. And now they are planning on getting rid of, well the rumour was they were planning on getting rid of the S.A.P. And go to hourly. Because that's another reason the people were saying this summer why there was no work for the S.A.P., because they didn't want the work for the S.A.P. They made sure the Hermasa was running at all times. Even though that machine was losing thousands of dollars a day, they made sure, because I guess the investment was into the machine so they had to try to make it work. But they didn't. When we left, it still wasn't working. And I think that is why the S.A.P., they were freezing a lot of fish or selling it, because they didn't want to pay the money that the packers can make right?*

Thus the mechanization that was brought in under an agreement to keep jobs was ultimately aimed at reducing staff. As Jane and Ralph attested, however, due to the malfunctioning of the machine, workers had to repack what the machine packed; thus, while the plant was not maintaining staff levels at the same rate as before, it was having to keep on double the crew that would normally work on the machine while the company attempted to get it working.

Mechanization was not the only source of increased job loss and reduced incomes for some; a forced pay cut also played a role. The forced pay cut in the capture plant came in 2011, when changes to the workers' collective agreement were accepted by the employee committee under the threat of plant closure. The company rationalized the decrease in wages by pointing to a combination of low herring catches and competition with other herring companies in other countries that paid significantly cheaper wages. In a news article reporting on the pay cut, the executive vice-president of the capture company was quoted as explaining, "The lower cost of labour in areas such as Thailand, Poland and Morocco means that domestic suppliers such as [name of the company] must find solutions to remain competitive and viable" (Stechyson 2011). The story reports that a pay cut of one to eight percent was agreed on, as well as a decrease in the amount of overtime workers could claim. Susan and Marnie discussed how employees were informed of this at the workplace, and how they are now stuck with the signed deal and unable to do anything about it.

*Susan: So you're damned if you do, and you're damned if you don't. When it came to the big crackdown, everything changed. We had no choice. They handed us a letter, said, read this letter; basically it said if you don't sign this contract,*

*we're leaving. So we had to tell them, and it's history. Now we're frustrated employees that have no say. We are a number and we do want to be heard. Really.*

*Marnie: And they threatened us with a contract. And I will say they threatened us with a contract. If we did not sign it we would be fired. So we signed the contract because, I have, well everyone else has families and kids in school, and all the stuff that goes with it.*

In addition to the forced pay cut that all workers in this plant were forced to accept, NL workers, who had been coming to work in the plants for close to ten years, were being specifically targeted through loss of seniority. When put in the context of the overall decrease in the quality of working conditions in the plants, reduced wages and their mobility costs, the loss of seniority was a strong incentive for NL workers to stop making the commute.

#### **7.5.2.2 The Shrinking Reserve Army of Labour in the Capture Seafood Plants**

One of the main ramifications of the decreasing work quality in capture processing plants was the loss of the NL workforce, which had made up much of the reserve army of labour during the peak season. This section looks at how NL workers began coming to Oceanside and how the overall decreases in work quality in the plants deterred NL workers, but also how specific changes were targeted at the NL workforce, further decreasing incentives for them to make the seasonal biannual commute to Oceanside. Initially, workers from NL worked in all the processing plants in the area, but since about 2005 or 2006, the number of NL workers making the commute to NB has decreased. This decrease is visibly noticeable to not only workers and managers, but to community members as well. This speaks to the way workers coming from NL to work in

the plants in the busy season became an ingrained part of not just the workforce, but the local community.

NL workers began to travel to other provinces, including PEI, Nova Scotia, and NB, to work in fish plants in the late 1990s/early 2000s, after the ground fish moratorium in NL and the subsequent closing of plants (Grzetic 2008). Jackie, a former NB plant worker living in NL, explained in her interview that the reason why she and her husband decided to go to NB to work was due to loss of employment in the local plant – “Because it closed down, because, well, that’s what they all do, close down.” Recruitment of workers from NL to the Oceanside plants in NB occurred through a variety of means, the most common being word-of-mouth. For example, Jane, from NL, heard about the opportunity from a family member; she explained how she had handed out twenty-five job applications to people she knew in NL, which resulted in fifteen people coming to work in the plants.

Aside from word-of-mouth, in some cases, active hiring processes occurred. This was the case in one plant, where the plant manager and an NL worker would make an annual trip out to NL to recruit workers. As explained by Andrew, the plant manager:

*Andrew: Usually we set up at one of the Services Canada, they give us space so we can hold interviews, uh, we advertise in the newspaper, tell them when we will be there and what time, give them our phone number here and set up appointments so when I go over there for three days that I have the appointments all made up and I know the next day if I am going to be in another area and find the Services Canada. After you have done it once or twice then you know the location so it’s not so time-consuming, right?*

Therefore, as Andrew mentions, not only was active recruitment of NL workers occurring, but it occurred multiple times. Yet fewer and fewer Newfoundlanders have

been making the commute to work in the capture plants. Interviewed workers and managers provided their understanding of why decreasing numbers of workers from NL were coming to work in the plants. For example, Jane, an NL worker mentioned above, went on to say that of the fifteen people she knew who had originally gone to NB, only two still worked in the plant. She also no longer encourages her friends and family to apply, worried that if she recommends it now and they go, they will no longer be her friends.

Not only workers discussed the decline of the NL workforce. Managers for the capture processing plants also provided a variety of reasons to explain the loss of NL workers. Managers credited the reduction in NL workers to increases in NL employment opportunities for the ageing workforce, either through retirement or a lack of interest in travelling for work. Andrew equates the decrease in NL workers with retirement, and Carrie describes how the NL workforce had decreased by more than fifty percent over the last few years, which she attributes to increases in job opportunities in NL.

*Andrew: And it's like the NL people, it worked out great, we had a lot of people out there looking for work, now those people are all older, and retired.*

*Carrie: So it is only during that peak season when we bring people from . . . often we will bring people from Newfoundland, for example, often we will bring them down, over, to help us during our peak season.*

*Interviewer: How large is that workforce?*

*Carrie: Umm, it has decreased somewhat because there is more employment now in NL than there was, okay? So there are probably less than a hundred Newfoundlanders now.*

*Interviewer: Okay, what did it used to be?*

*Carrie: Uh, it used to be over a hundred, okay, uh, and less than two. . . . We're probably at fifty now, okay? With the increase in jobs in Newfoundland, it hasn't been necessary for them to relocate during the summer, which is great for them.*

The argument Carrie makes that job opportunities have increased in NL is an interesting one, and does have some merit, as normal employment restrictions in both NB and NL, such as retirement, have opened up jobs in NL (Reid 2014, personal communication). Yet there have also been plant closures in both provinces in the last ten years, as well as significant changes in the work environment, especially in the last four or five years, that have played a role in deterring NL workers from investing the extensive amount of time, labour, and stress that can go into making the lengthy commute.

Capture processing managers noted the decrease in the NL workforce, upon which they had previously each relied quite significantly (over a hundred people came annually to one plant), and with which they were happy; as Andrew states, the NL people “worked out great.” Andrew links the reduction in NL workers to the ageing workforce; below, he adds that there is a lack of interest on the part of workers, especially younger workers, in working in NB when they can make more money out west. This is similar to managers’ explanations of shortages of young workers from NB. Andrew starts off talking about a negative experience he had recruiting NL workers the last time he traveled to NL.

*Andrew: The only thing, what it is, like anything else they can say, “Oh, this is great, and I hope I get the job,” and I get all the paperwork done for thirty-five of them and that last year, and like I told you, five came and then three of them left. After we had spent hundreds – actually, thousands, probably – for the two of us over there and renting a car to go around and do it all, it just, it used to work, but it just doesn't anymore.*

*Interviewer: So why do you think that they don't want to come anymore?*

*Andrew: Well, like I told you before, the ones that were affected by the cod fishery are older now, and they just, they're not travelling. But they did at that time, they were in their fifties and sixties. They were used to being around boats all their lives and would take any kind of job, but the younger generation, they don't stop in NB, they just keep driving. It's not that big of a deal anymore so. . . .*

*I think that is the difference, or that's my observation, anyway.*

While he claimed that workers would rather work out west than in the fish plants, Andrew, later in the interview, also described recent changes to shift schedules resulting in decreased overtime, and the low wages that these workers are getting paid.

*Andrew: Right. I know that a lot of the people here, they want the hours. Because we do pay one-and-a-half times minimum wage for overtime, and this is, the folks from NL, for example, I am going back a few years but they told me there is no sense in moving over here for forty hours a week. That doesn't pay to move that far, with your gasoline, having to pay rent, let's say, and buying your groceries and leaving your home, for \$11 x forty hours a week. It just doesn't, it's not feasible, so we've got to work, five, six, and maybe even seven if it was allowed, but it's not, to have the overtime to make it worth their while.*

Andrew points out not only that he had not been hiring NL workers for a few years, but also that a key part of why workers from NL are no longer coming to NB is because without overtime, it's not financially viable. It was not until later, during the plant tour, that Andrew explained that workers from NL had been quite angry about reduced shifts and loss of overtime because of the high cost of making the commute. This culminated in a confrontation in which Andrew felt verbally abused by the angry NL workers. The statement was made in the context of comparing how he was treated by the Filipino workers, (who called him sir), versus the NL workers. The loss of overtime is significant to NL workers due to the large investment these workers make in the commute, but also in terms of what they miss at home. Krista, who has been traveling with her husband to work in the fish plants for the last seven years, describes an example of this investment in planning and packing for their annual commute.

*Interviewer: And so you have to rent a place where you're travelling to and then you have to maintain your home where you live?*

*Krista: That's right, that's right.*

**Interviewer:** And how did you find that experience?

**Krista:** Terrible. Terrible, terrible, terrible, times many. Well we were running into two seasons, summer and fall season, so there was for both of us summer clothes, fall clothes, times four times, then there was fish plant clothes for the both of us, you know, and three of those years we had nothing in the apartment, only a fridge and stove, so we carried an air mattress, which we're not used to, and, uh, a card table, fold-down card table, fold-down chairs for the kitchen, so it was.

**Interviewer:** So you were bringing all that with you?

**Krista:** Well, it all folds down, a couple stools that fold down, and a TV tray that folds down, anything that we could that could fold down that was what was down. And we had those crates, those blue crates. After the first year, we knew exactly how much we could take, we even knew like where in the car we would put what. You know I had the two suitcases in the back seat, like the big one, the thicker one, and then the smaller one on the other side so [husband's name] could see out through the window a bit better, and then we had three crates on top of those and it was hard going. I had it down pat. I knew actually where everything could go to. You know, it wasn't easy. You know, leaving here, driving to [where the ferry is], it's a long drive.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, how long does that take you?

**Krista:** About ten hours. And then it was all night on the boat, and then it was eight hours' drive to get where we had to go to. So depending if you stopped or you didn't stop you had to deal with a seven-and-a-half, you might end up doing it in nine-and-a-half. And depending if you had a lot of rain, you had to slow down, you know, water on the road, and we had that. And I don't like the boat anyway, I was uptight by the time it was to go and I was, used to be petrified of the wind, and not only that but I would get squeamish and I would have to get to the bathroom. And on the way back I would get, I don't know if you would say stressed out, but I used to think about it a lot. Wonder what the weather was going to be like and if it was going to be windy and rain coming down. I think it was two years ago, when we came down we had some snow, and I was wondering about that where we had only all seasons [tires], we don't use them right, we use them in the summer and then we puts the other ones on in the winter [studded winter tires]. So it was all that kind of stuff to think about, right? And then if something happened to the car and, then after the first year we knew exactly where to gas up, I had a little book and I would keep it in my purse and I knew exactly where to go to because there is nothing, like on the side of the road, on the highway, you had to take exits see, so when we weren't familiar with that side of the province we had to know where we were going to get gas, right? We couldn't run out of gas. And then working you had to pack up here, and then unpack up there, and uh pack up to come back, and unpack when you came back. And we were working and packing to come back. I clean the apartment, the fridge and the stove and everything was all scrubbed before I came back. So it wasn't easy, you know. And not used to having to leave home. And things going on back here that I wanted to be back for but I couldn't because I was too far away. And then, well, your family.

*You miss your family. And, uh, with our children, our child, who I suppose was an adult, but we still miss him. We were going for a nice ways, a long time, and then we had to have somebody care for our house.*

Krista provides a detailed picture of the multiple layers of organization, planning, and anxiety that the long commute to and from NB entailed for her and her husband. There were serious safety risks that had to be factored into just the drive itself: weather, road conditions, where gas stations were located so they would not be stranded on the side of the road, visibility concerns when packing everything they needed into the car. The packing alone was an ordeal, about the same as moving twice a year, and anyone who has ever moved knows how much mental and physical energy that takes. And then there are the costs – the cost of gas, of wear and tear on the vehicle from the high mileage, the cost of the ferry going and back, the cost of renting a place in Oceanside, and of having someone care for their house in NL.

Other workers mentioned additional worry and expense, such as insurance, cable, internet, phone and heat bills that had to be paid in two places for six months. In addition, there were the other costs that were incurred by living in NB for six months, which included furniture if apartments were unfurnished, and cooking appliances (barbecues, deep fryers, etc.). NL workers rented local apartments, long-term motel rooms, or even stayed in a campground for the June-to-October season. Jane explains that rent had continually increased over the years, even in the campgrounds.

***Interviewer:*** *So where do people stay? Do the Newfoundlanders all stay in the same spot?*

***Jane:*** *No. Some stay in the campground; they are paying \$1,400 a year for a campground, and you had your own camper.*

***Interviewer:*** *Would they drive it down?*

***Jane:*** *They bought it and left it there all year. But that was only, like, this year, it*

*used to be, two years ago, the campground was all Newfoundlanders, it had to be twenty-five campers that were all Newfoundlanders. This year I think there was five. So it was about five people this year, I can't even think of the five, but I am guessing it was five. . . . But most people took apartments, like I wouldn't be able to live in a campground, that's nuts, you come home from working all day, and then you have to line up to get in the shower, no, I want comfort, you have to have comfort, and I don't mean cushy comfort; I mean basics, I like to come home to my own shower, to my own house, and those campgrounds, they are parked door-to-door-to-door, and there is no privacy. The landlord who I was renting from, she kept the apartment, so I had the same apartment. But the rent has skyrocketed. Since more and more people are coming in to work at [NB Cannery], the locals have drove the rent to the roof. So this summer we were paying \$700 a month, that's not including utilities, nothing, that was just rent. It started off seven years ago we were paying \$480, now it's \$700, and it keeps going up. And this year was a very poor year at [NB Cannery]. It was the worst that they seen, and the worst since we've been up there seven years. So we thought it over this year and we thought oh, this is not, it's to the point now it's now worth it anymore. If I am going to be sitting, you know we were on call all summer, so you didn't know when you had work, and when you didn't, you may get in for four hours a week, you may not. So if you're going to be sitting at home. . . . But the only thing that helped us through this summer was our EI. Our EI managed to stretch it out until we were finished. If it wasn't for that, we would have had to pack up and come home. And it costs \$1,000 to get down right. \$500 up, \$500 back. So we were thinking, if it wouldn't have been EI, we would've been home probably in July.*

The rent increasing at the same time as their shifts decreased was also mentioned by Krista when she discussed how many weeks of work she usually got at the plant in Oceanside:

***Krista:** Usually, I think I have run into sixteen, seventeen weeks and then it started to go up a bit, and then this year I think it was twenty-one. The summer past I think it was about twenty-one weeks, there was a lot of downtime, and we didn't get near as many hours as we did before, those times we were home and back in the apartment and rent. High rent.*

While both Krista and Jane mention the high cost of rent alongside decreasing hours at the plant, plus more time away from NL overall, Jane also describes the decreasing number of NL workers coming to work in NB. She notes that twenty campers had

stopped coming, and there were only five left. Krista's discussion about her weeks of work shows she has had to stay longer in the community at the same time as she has worked fewer hours. This would mean that workers are incurring more costs (rent, food, electricity, cable, etc.) while making less money. Jane further notes that if it had not been for EI, she would have returned to NL. Counter to common narratives around seafood processing workers and their use of EI, Jane was not collecting EI to stay home; she was using EI to stay employed at the plant.

As Jane points out, working conditions deteriorated in terms of both how much work NL workers were getting, and their work environment:

***Jane:** There was no communication between the company and its workers. It was just awful. And not even, from the outside even – the locals, like the locals was so . . . everybody, it was just crazy this year. And I am thinking, to leave [for] here you are giving up a lot. When you leave here and go outside to work, you leave your family, you leave your home, the expense to go to work, and then to get somewhere and be treated like that, you're thinking to yourself, no. Now if there were no fish, and we understood that, we had many years in our plants here that there have been no fish, you deal with that, they have no control. But to be treated like, they don't really care. Yeah, I don't even think you are a number to this crowd. It was awful this, really, really bad. The workers mucking about themselves, and then you had the company, like I said before, if you go to them with a problem, they say this is how it is, you like it or you go through the door. You know what, I can tell you why. I am going to be quite honest. The first, say the first four years for sure we were going there, like, we felt appreciated. Right, they, I mean it was a good atmosphere, the workers, like you looked forward to going to work. But the new company took it over a few years ago. It had been going downhill.*

Another worker also talked about deterioration of the work environment, including alienation, reduced hours, shifts, and overtime.

***Renée:** They are not nice people. You are just a number to them now. One time, they wouldn't, like when [name of company] owed it, like [full name of company], if you didn't have your hours, they'd bend over backwards to get your hours. These people? You're just a number. I was talking to people from NL yesterday*

*and they said they don't think they are coming back next year, they think they're done.*

**Interviewer:** *So, how many people from NL work in plants? Do you have any idea?*

**Renée:** *There used to be quite a few. Like there used to be, I say, oh my god, fifty or sixty anyway on my shift. And now, last, the last time I was there, there might have been six.*

**Marnie:** *So I don't know. It's hard, I want to leave, I don't like it. If the environment of the company was better I probably wouldn't complain as much. I would never say anything to the bosses because my days would be numbered and I know it. They would find a way. There use to be a lot of people that came from Newfoundland, and there is only a handful now. The whole night shift, they use to do night shift, it used to be three-quarters Newfoundlanders.*

A forced pay cut for all workers was an important change, and it happened when seasonal NL workers were asked to sign away their seniority. The loss of their seniority and the way it was done upset workers. NL workers were brought into the office one by one over three days just before they headed back to NL in 2011. They were given three choices: sign away all the seniority they had accrued since working in NB; move full-time to the community; or not come back at all.

**Jane:** *Last year, we worked all summer, then three days before they let us off, because their layoff time is always the last week in October, three days before layoff date last year, there was sixty-odd Newfoundlanders there, and the company came down to us, three days, and said to us, you have to sign off, sign away your seniority. If you don't, you have to stay here and live and work.*

**Interviewer:** *Oh no, really?*

**Jane:** *Yes. We had no choice in the matter, if we didn't sign away our six years of seniority, they wouldn't give us a layoff. They wouldn't. If we had quit, we would have had no unemployment, it would have been the summer wasted. And we were going in the hole because last year our truck cost us three grand, so we were sinking big time last year and I was thinking, well, what do you do? Everyone was in a panic, three days before they laid us off. They brought us in the office one by one. Sign it or—*

**Interviewer:** *So not even as a group?*

**Jane:** *No, no, one at a time we were brought in and the paper was pushed in front of ya, and that's what you were told. And I thought, this is not legal, this can't be legal. You know when we applied for that job, we applied seasonal. Right. And I*

*said to our management that called me in, I said go check, go check our application, it says seasonal. You have a choice of full-time, part-time, seasonal, we picked out seasonal. Nope. And apparently there was a clause in the contract somewhere, but the company before that, this company couldn't find [it], it was conniving, it was sneaky, it was. . . . So when we came back, when we went up this summer, we were starting up fresh. Our six years was now gone.*

**Interviewer:** *That's horrible.*

**Jane:** *It was horrible, it was really horrible. That was just the start of what was to come. Yup, we don't have seniority anymore, we have years of service. So if somebody that they hired on this year, they would be ahead of us. See, once they get their 480 hours, they would come ahead of us. Because we have no seniority.*

**Interviewer:** *So once they have worked more hours than you guys then they are higher than you, is that how that works?*

**Jane:** *Well, say like when we went back this year we had no seniority, 'kay? We started off, so the guy that they hired last year—*

**Interviewer:** *Was ahead of you*

**Jane:** *Right. We have six years, he is ahead of us. So that is the start of, we thought, oh my god, this company can actually do that. You imagine, we all had our ferries booked, we all had our apartments gave up for the end of the month, we were all packed to go, and then just throw that on to us. This is why this year it was only twenty, thirty people went back.*

**Interviewer:** *Yeah, and how many did you say had gone the year before? Seventy?*

**Jane:** *It was seventy-odd people.*

The threats used by this company, including plant closures and termination of jobs, were being used as a tool not only to reduce pay, but also to increase the precariousness of the work (via loss of seniority as well as shifts) and of access to hours needed for EI. It also kept the workforce docile. Workers felt not just that they could get fired for any reason, but that the company was looking for any excuse to let them go. This stress and anxiety extended into my research, as many workers thought I was hired by the company to find a reason to fire them, making them less-willing to be interviewed. The increased stress and precariousness of the workplace in seafood processing, in combination with increased mechanization and loss of seasonal employment in aquaculture, have worked to push local and other Canadian workers out

of seafood processing, and to deter new, especially young, workers from entering. Thus, qualitative labour shortages have contributed to the ability of companies to justify their use of the TFWP.

Government has not been completely exempt from the multitude of factors that have worked to manufacture labour shortages. Aside from provincial government economic support for both the aquaculture and seafood processing industries (see chapters 5 and 6), the Harper government's changes to the EI program in 2012 contributed to seafood processing workers' stress at Oceanside, to anxiety around taking seasonal work at the plant, and to the manufacturing of labour shortages.

## **7.6 Discussion**

This chapter thus far has focused on how labour shortages were produced within a local and interprovincial workforce that had historically been introduced into the work and community as a seasonal, just-in-time army of labour that met the needs of the industry. As the industry became more fully integrated into global corporate expansion/consolidation models, first in aquaculture and then in the capture processing plants, NL workers fit less-well with the corporate model and faced competition from an alternative flexible and captive labour source, made possible through the TFWP (see chapter 8). The data from my interviews provided an in-depth, case-specific examination of who was working in the Oceanside seafood processing plants in NB in 2012, and two overarching and congruent narratives from workers, community members, and plant managers explaining why they thought labour shortages existed in this area's seafood processing industry. Building on this interview data, organized around these two

narratives, I now draw from relevant literatures to discuss these findings in order to provide a broader, more detailed context to the changes that were occurring in labour force composition, including a loss of young workers, long-time local workers, and seasonally migrant NL workers, in the seafood processing plants of Oceanside.

### ***7.6.1 Analyzing Two Narratives on Labour Shortage***

The qualitative aspects of the labour shortage in this industry and town in 2012 are framed within the larger argument that increased corporate power has redefined work quality and loyalty and, aided by neoliberal government policies, specifically EI reform and the TFWP, increased employment precariousness and instability within a company-town context. This provides a counter-narrative to the dominant narrative used by management and others that those who work in seafood processing and are on EI are lazy and not willing to work hard, and that young people do not want to work in seafood processing because they do not like that kind of work anymore.

Managers, as well as some business owners and a few workers, engaged in the dominant narrative to explain labour shortages in the local plants, including saying that youth do not want to work at manual-labour jobs; that the NL workforce is ageing out of the industry, no longer wanting to make the commute for the shifts and hours on offer; and that seafood processing workers who engage in seasonal employment rhythms are only looking to get their minimum EI hours and are no longer loyal to the company.

### ***7.6.2 Bad Workers or Bad Jobs***

While there may be some weight to the argument that youth want to focus on white-collar jobs, or at least less physically taxing jobs, than those on offer at fish plants,

I argue that the lack of youth in seafood processing may have less to do with the aspirations of young people than it does with the degradation of the quality of these jobs and the erosion of company loyalty that had been established alongside the original paternal relationship associated with the company-town model that many of these workers' parents and grandparents grew up with. I heard similar responses when I interviewed fish plant workers in BC in 2008 (Knott 2009).

The erosion of work quality in seafood processing, including its status as a “good job,” is playing a role in manufacturing labour shortages in the industry. What is a good job? The use of the term, how to define it, and how to measure it are all somewhat debatable (see Burchell et al. 2014 for an overview of this debate), but Kalleberg (2011) provides the basic consensus on the requirements for a good job. These include: 1) high pay and the opportunity for wage increases over time; 2) benefits that cover health and retirement needs; 3) autonomy and control over work activities; 4) worker-controlled flexibility, scheduling, and terms of employment; and 5) control over the termination of the job (Kalleberg 2011, 9). Has seafood processing *ever* been a “good job” based on these criteria? Maybe not, but it was considered “good” work for many of the workers who grew up with parents and grandparents working in the plants. The interview data show that workers (both former and current) no longer define seafood processing work as a good job, due in many cases to forced pay cuts and wage decreases, loss of autonomy, control, flexibility, and terms of employment, and, in many cases, termination of the job. The threat of job loss was identified as a constant source of anxiety for these workers.

Reluctance to encourage youth to enter the seafood industry has also been

documented in a NL study targeting youth in rural communities (Power et al. 2014). This study's findings, and those here, speak to an overall decline in work security and work quality in seafood processing across Canada. This may be part of what Corbett (2007) identifies as a "migration imperative," in which pressure to leave home for better economic opportunities elsewhere is considered among the "ethical and moral" responsibilities of youth (431). Therefore, it may be the case in Oceanside that young workers who were able to were taking jobs in Alberta and Saskatchewan due to knowledge of, as well as negative discourse around, the "bad jobs" available in seafood processing.

The evolution of seafood processing jobs in NB from ones that were once attractive over the long term to ones that, if one listens to management and media, no one wants to work at, seems to be connected to industry-level mergers and acquisitions that occurred in the capture and aquaculture sectors. When one aquaculture company came to dominate the industry, it not only reduced the number of jobs available (which counters the narrative that aquaculture creates jobs), it also reduced the pay and job quality of the sector. Jobs in aquaculture, at least in this community, under a specific model of large corporate agglomeration and global competitiveness, have set the bar for an occupation that is now defined by its low pay, little to no overtime, loss of seasonal employment (which for many local and NL workers was a deterrent), increased mechanization, and a large workforce brought in through the TFWP. Taken together, these may have triggered a similar, if not worse, working environment in NB Cannery by attracting interest from private equity firms (see chapter 5).

This high-paced, high production environment involves hard physical work that is difficult to physically sustain year-round, full-time. Yet aquaculture is praised for its role in shifting resource-based work away from the traditional seasonal rhythm dictated by the fish. And the loss of seasonal employment is usually followed by praise for increasing employment:

Aquaculture has transformed [name of area in NB] from a high unemployment –low income area to one of relative prosperity within the province. Though income and employment levels remain below provincial averages, the County has made substantial gains over the past 20 years from an economy characterized by seasonal employment and limited opportunity. Aquaculture and its supply and service industries offer year-round employment and good incomes in an export industry that has become the foundation of the local economy (DFO 2013).

While the jobs losses are attributed to consolidation and business failures, and include labourers in all segments of aquaculture, not just processing plants, there seems to be mounting evidence that aquaculture may not be as good for employment as was originally projected. Aquaculture's negative impact on local labour employment seems to be tied more to the corporate model under which it is structured than to the industry itself. However, this directly contradicts findings in BC by Young and Matthews (2010), who found that large corporations, when compared to smaller companies, offered better pay and benefits. This might be due to the fact that the smaller companies were not involved in salmon aquaculture, but in cultured shellfish, and thus were much smaller and much more volatile in terms of markets.

Inconsistencies in labour-force numbers and reported job losses in aquaculture have now been documented in Canada, as well as Europe. There was a significant disparity (a difference of almost 3,000), for instance, in the number of jobs created as

estimated by DFO, the BC aquaculture industry, and the independent firm MMK Consulting Provincial Legislature's Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture (2007). It has also been noted that in BC, as well as in Scotland and Norway, while the aquaculture industry saw significant growth throughout the early twenty-first century, this was accompanied by decreases in employment (Marshall 2003). Similar findings have been documented in Maine (Harvey and Milewski 2007). Thus, while the aquaculture industry's role, identified by the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers, is "[t]o continue to advance responsible and sustainable development and bring employment and prosperity to rural and coastal communities" (CCFAM 2010, 7), it is not bound to fill local jobs with the traditional local workforce. When aquaculture switched its production rhythm to fit a full-time employment model, this allowed it to get rid of its seasonal workers, who at the time (1990s) were largely coming from NL.

### ***7.6.3 Understanding NL Workers' Mobility and its Connection to Bad Jobs***

Understanding the work-related mobility of those coming from NL to work in fish plants in NB necessitates an understanding of the significant history in NL of work-related mobility before, and more significantly after, the collapse of the ground fishery in 1990 and the subsequent moratorium in 1992–3. Workers historically left for extended periods of time while fishing in the summer, and at work camps (forestry and mining) in the winter (Walsh 2012). In addition, young people had a long history of migrating out of small communities for better jobs and lives (often to Toronto, Labrador, or the US), and did so without decreasing the populations of their home community, due to large families and return migration (McDonald et al. 2012). This began to change after the cod

moratorium in NL, and the (re)restructuring of the fishing industry, resulting in plant closures in many communities (Bavington et al. 2004; Neis and Grzetic 2005).

Community members of all ages began to travel long distances to gain employment out of province, but many remained tied to the communities through their families – usually a spouse and children, as well as extended family.

Workers in seafood processing in NL, much like elsewhere in Canada in the 1980s and 1990s (and currently), were predominantly women. Approximately 12,000 women working in the fishery in NL lost their jobs after the moratorium in the early 1990s (Neis and Grzetic 2005). Overall, it was seafood processing workers who lost the most jobs compared to fish harvesters after the collapse of the cod stocks. The numbers of seafood processing workers in NL dropped from an estimated 20,000 between 1988 and 1989 to 8,000 in 2011 (Neis et al. 2013). In response, in an effort to aid fishery workers, the government set up two adjustment programs to provide compensation and to help displaced workers gain new skills. These included the Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program (NCARP) and the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS), which also included a Post-TAGS component. By the year 2000, all support programs had ended, right on the heels of major restructuring of the Unemployment Insurance Program in 1996, when it was renamed Employment Insurance (EI). The changes to EI resulted in increased ineligibility of seafood processing workers due to more stringent qualifying conditions (Neis and Grzetic 2005; McDonald, Neis, and Murray 2008).

The EI changes were consistent with restructuring and rationalization processes on the national and provincial scales that, as discussed in previous chapters, were

indicative of a hollowing-out of social programs that were part of neoliberal-infused economic and social policy transformations occurring at that time. Literature has shown that these had a particularly negative impact on NL women workers and contributed to a general reduction in both labour power and employment quality for all workers (see Dolan et al. 2005; Neis and Grzetic 2001; Neis and Grzetic 2005). It is not hard to understand why it was around this time that NL seafood processing workers began to migrate to other Atlantic provinces for seasonal employment, sometimes for as long as six months at a time.

When NL workers first began to work in NB, plants jobs were still abundant in both the aquaculture and capture seafood companies. Agglomeration and consolidation processes in both industries had not yet reduced the number of plants to the four that remain now. It seems plausible that at that time, companies may have struggled to fill all the jobs in the plants with just the local workforce. Table 7.1 shows that the regional population during this time was growing, and the gradual decline of the population coincided with consolidations in both industries.

These seasonally migrant NL workers partake of a form of circular migration (Bell and Ward 2000) because they return every year, on a seasonal basis, to where they live, making up a reserve army of labour for other provinces' processing industries. This allowed NL workers to remain, at least part of the year, in their home communities. Many Newfoundlanders traveled as a couple, and some even brought their children (Grzetic 2008). Of the workers from NL that I spoke with, all had travelled as couples, but some knew of women who travelled alone.

For the NL workers who were migrating to work in NB at the time of this study, the ability to return home was the very reason they had left their home province to begin with. In 2012 migrant NL workers were forced to choose between a loss of hours, overtime, or seniority unless they moved permanently to the NB community. Alternatively they could quit and lose the winter income provided by their EI claims, because under the reformed EI policy, if they quit, they became ineligible for EI. The choices available reduced the number of NL workers making the commute to NB, and this helped manufacture a regional labour shortage allowing companies to tap into the overseas labour market via the TFWP. Thus, situations like this one speak of calculated decisions on the part of upper management in the processing industry to decrease a particular workforce significantly in a short amount of time. For workers coming from NL who decided to stay, the loss of their seniority meant that they would be maintained at a cheaper wage over a much longer period, and would not be in a position to secure favourable hours/shifts.

#### ***7.6.4 Fear and Anxiety in Bad Jobs***

Workers in this area and industry were working within an environment of intense anxiety and fear of job loss and loss of EI eligibility in 2012. While the fear and anxiety among workers were palpable while I was doing my research, I naively thought they were a bit alarmist, because what company would invest money to hire a spy in order to redefine a workforce? Yet this is a much more common corporate strategy than I could have imagined, and has an established history within Canada. For example, Hyde (1986) states:

From the Civil War through the Great Depression, employers utilized a variety of weapons during conflicts with labor, including armed guards, injunctions, strikebreakers, soldiers, and spies. Spies supposedly helped employers anticipate labor problems and unrest among workers, prevent the growth of labor organizations, and eliminate labor agitators quickly from the workforce (1).

The use of private security firms is a historical tool that has been reinvigorated under current neoliberal economic policies of global privatization and economic deregulation. I found the news story documenting the pay cut by NB Cannery reposted on a company blog that specializes in, among other security-related things, labour disputes and plant closures. Its website states that “[s]ince 1982, [company name] has assisted more than 5,000 image conscious clients of all sizes and in every industry, including many Fortune 500 corporations plan for and execute business continuity response strategies for plant closures, labor disputes and mass layoffs or downsizing” (Afirmac-usa.com). Whether this company aided in organizing the NB Cannery pay cut or not is unknown, yet the existence of such a company and its posting of the story are still significant in terms of what they say about the capacity corporations have to wield their power over dissenting labour pools, or, in this case, over workers forced into a reduction in pay and seniority. Given the environment that existed for workers when I was in NB, it is perhaps surprising that any workers at all were willing to speak with me.

#### ***7.6.5 The Attack on Seasonal Employment and EI: New Capital Rhythms for Workers***

Thus, while management are rationalizing bringing in a workforce from overseas and shipping product out to be processed based on claims about labour shortages in their home communities, these labour shortages were at least partially created by changing their plants’ terms of employment. Many workers who left were reported to be dedicated,

loyal, hard workers, who were forced out through the degradation of work environments, coupled with decreased hours, pay, and overtime. Work became more precarious.

Changes to corporate organization within companies led to increased changes across companies, and while they were reflective of larger global corporate models driven by economic competitiveness, the actual changes were locally implemented and reflective of both local and national labour migration patterns, and changes to government policies such as EI as it relates to seasonal employment.

Seasonal work has also been declining steadily in Canada in general. Gray and McDonald (2010) discovered the rate of seasonal employment declined considerably, especially in the years 1993 to 2002, due to shrinking employment in seasonal industries, and a general trend away from part-year employment. They argue, “[t]here is some empirical evidence that suggests that firms are adept in either their technology of production [i.e. improved technology] or their human-resource management practices such that the seasonality of employment is reduced” (Gray and McDonald 2010, 24). Kuhn and Riddell (2010) point to the role of markets in the reduction of numbers of seasonal employees. In their comparison of seasonal employment and EI in Maine and New Brunswick, they argue that Canada's Employment Insurance program has aided in the continuation of seasonal employment that would otherwise have been lost. “Thus, the study of these jurisdictions may shed light on the process of labor force adjustment. For instance, we can examine the extent to which expansion of UI [EI] in Canada helped preserve a (seasonal) ‘way of life’ that was forced into extinction by market forces elsewhere” (Kuhn and Riddell 185). They also found that gender was a significant factor

in levels of seasonal employment. Before employment insurance programs were introduced in Canada, more women in NB worked full-time than in Maine, but fifty years after the UI/EI program was initiated in Canada, they found that these rates had almost reversed, with more women in NB working part-time compared to the number of women employees in Maine, who of course were not able to use the program. These authors are arguing that EI plays a negative role by contributing to seasonal work, dependency, and poverty; and limiting productivity and ultimately growth and capital gains.

Viewing this through the lens of feminist political economy, one could argue that workers, especially rural and women workers, may prefer a seasonal way of life that allows them to live in rural communities and engage in certain unpaid work responsibilities, such as raising children and caring for the elderly, and also harvesting or self-supply methods that are part of the rhythm of work/life balance.

In rural areas the potential for self-supply, or household production, creates a third-time allocation possibility for individuals. There may not be as many regular jobs in productive activities outside formal employment. Self-supply allows an individual in rural communities to meet some of their demands for goods and services either directly or through barter with their neighbors. In this situation a modest public subsidy through EI/UI may be sufficient to maintain households at a relatively high quality of life (Freshwater and Simms 2008, 2).

The work/life rhythm that was established through the creation of the company-town model and expanded through the introduction of Keynesian social welfare policies also catered to capitalist ideals of profit growth and consumption. This differs from the current corporate capitalist model, which relies on profits through financial gains in the worth of the companies themselves, and not as much on the products they produce. Thus, from a feminist political economy perspective, the discussion on seasonal employment and EI

thus needs to shift from a narrative about lazy workers to one about industry-specific tasks, work quality, and a work/life balance that may prioritize other activities above paid productive labour, due to either will or lack of alternative employment opportunities. Regardless, many seasonal workers in rural areas have structured a high-quality life around a program into which workers pay as insurance for when they are unable to work, which is indicative of many resource-based jobs.

Changes to the UI/EI programs have been done in such a way as to reduce access and force seasonal workers to take on bad jobs, or to exit the workforce altogether. Either way, government policies have direct implications for production processes (Warriner and Peach 2007). The changes to the Employment Insurance program in Canada not only bought into a narrative of seasonal workers as lazy, but also contributed to the narrative that bad jobs should be acceptable to Canadian workers.

In response to the 2013 EI changes, the NB Federation of Labour sent out a press release in the form of a letter addressed to Martine Coulobme, Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, pointing out that less than forty percent of unemployed Canadians now qualified for EI. The letter highlighted changes to the EI program with which they took issues, including: 1) the creation of a Social Security Tribunal that greatly reduced the number of people (from 1,000 to thirty-nine) who made decisions on over 25,000 cases per year; and 2) changes to the EI program that included ambiguous definitions of what constituted suitable employment and reasonable effort. The worry was that these changes would result in long delays in claims processing, and less-knowledgeable staff.

The NB Federation of Labour was also concerned with the combined effects of changes to the pilot project called *Working While on Claim* and the loss of another pilot project that allowed workers in high-unemployment regions to access five extra weeks of benefits. They argued that this would have the most negative impact on areas of high unemployment (Bourdreau 2012). Due to the high rate of seasonal work in Atlantic Canada, and the fact that these changes were put into place without any consultation with provincial or territorial governments or relevant stakeholders, an advisory panel was appointed by the Atlantic premiers in June 2013. The panel released a report titled *Pan-Atlantic Study of the Impact of Recent Changes to Employment Insurance: Advisory Panel Final Report* in June 2014. The findings of the report suggest that the overall rate of EI usage in Atlantic Canada has been declining, along with the percentage of income that EI payments comprise. Rural areas are more likely to use EI, and depend on it for more of their total income. The report also found that seasonal employment was higher in Atlantic Canada and was especially prominent in resource industries and tourism. Seafood processing was in the top three industries for highest levels of seasonal employment in NL, NB, and NS. The report also showed that seasonal industries were significant contributors to their regional economies. Another significant finding was that women were most negatively affected by the new EI guidelines' forced commute for work (up to one hundred km from home), due to their unpaid work responsibilities. The report is significant in its recognition of the importance of the communities people call home, as well as of seasonal employment, in Atlantic Canada. It argues:

Seasonal industries are essential to Atlantic Canada's economy and are an important employer in the region. Provinces need to develop a comprehensive

strategy that will assist employers to continue to operate in the area and to support them in the expansion and development of new products, cross-sector integration, extension of seasons, and innovative opportunities to reposition and grow seasonal economies through program support and competitive business-friendly policies (42).

The changes to EI may work to exacerbate labour shortages in seasonal industries in Atlantic Canada, as workers who are able to find full-time work in other industries may choose not to return to seafood processing. The issue then becomes that these workers may be forced to make less money (up to seventy percent less, as the new changes state) despite their full-time status, and to give up time they had previously allocated to unpaid work. For women, this may require the use of extra daycare or childcare, which would further reduce the income they have left over after paying childcare expenses. It may be a preferable option to resort to income assistance rather than work a low-paying job, with no downtime or family time, for about the same amount of money.

When employers have used flexibility to increase productivity, lower costs and shift the insecurity and risk associated with market fluctuations onto the employee, the outcome is often degraded, low-paid and insecure work. It has also resulted in the increasing requirement to work unsocial and unpredictable (atypical) hours and a continuing intensification of work effort, especially for women. . . . Children, to a very large degree, still run on standard time (Coyle (2005: 78).

The changes to EI reflect policy changes that work in favour of corporate labour ideals, including increased flexibility and precariousness of work, and further punish those who have been identified by my interviewees as the working poor. The linkages between industrial (re)organization and local labour markets within the context of increased flexibility and casualization that began via neoliberal policies in the 1980s have been explored by both Storper and Scott (1990) and Peck (1992). Storper and Scott

(1990) provide three examples of labour flexibility; *individualized* employment relations, *internal flexibility*, and *external flexibility*.

First, there is an attempt to *individualize* the employment relation, moving away from (institutionalized and therefore comparatively rigid) collective bargaining and negotiation systems in key areas such as wage setting. Second, firms are seeking to achieve enhanced *internal flexibility* through labor process changes such as multiskilling and reduced job demarcation. Third, *external flexibility* is being sought through strategies (such as the deployment of part-time and temporary workers) that enable rapid quantitative adjustments to the labour intake to be made in accordance with fluctuating production needs (Storper and Scott 1990, in Peck 1992, 327).

All three forms of flexibility are indicative of changes described in this chapter by the community members and workers in NB within the seafood processing industries.

Therefore the dominant narrative that exists that seasonal workers who are using EI are lazy clearly ignores the complexity of how some workers have organized their paid and unpaid labour and time.

## **7.7 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has complicated the narrative that there was a shortage of skilled workers in seafood processing in Oceanside as of 2012 caused by lack of interest by young people and lazy local workers. This narrative helped employers justify the use of the TFWP in the sector. The chapter aimed to show how the decrease in both local and NL labourers within the seafood processing plants in NB came about at least in part via changes to work quality and work rhythms in the seafood processing plants, looking first at seafood processing in the aquaculture industry, and then in the capture industry. Changes to the aquaculture industry, including reduced pay, shift changes, and loss of seasonal work, decreased its workforce overall, but especially the NL workforce, whose circular mobility

was inherent in their desire to come to Oceanside to work. Loss of seasonal work served not only to support a labour shortage, but also to redefine work rhythm and work quality in seafood processing, aligning its production process with market demands, and not the live resource, or mobile workforce. Changes to the capture seafood processing industry also included decreased work quality, including pay cuts, loss of hours, increased mechanization, and, for NL workers especially, loss of seniority. Both seafood processing industries attempted to recreate an immobilized workforce, or a labour shortage, by telling the NL workers to relocate, leave, or accept the reduced working conditions. This process in effect reduced the pool of regional workers willing to work in the industry and may have helped employers justify accessing the TFWP. It is a process of corporate-level strategies at the human resource level, as well as the production/technological level, that has created unwelcoming and precarious work environments. This has ultimately deterred younger workers from entering this occupation, and, even more significantly, pushed out the sector's most loyal and hard-working employees. This, in a sense, is an example of corporations severing their end of the bargain, and rescinding their part of the loyalty pact with workers. When labour agency is removed, especially in a non-unionized environment, workers become vulnerable, anxious, and stressed, and begin to look elsewhere for employment that is less precarious. The next chapter focuses on the employee narrative that local workers looking for work in these areas are not getting hired. Instead, the new labourers in NB seafood processing plants (as well as, to a smaller extent, in BC) are workers coming in through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. This program in a sense redefines the loyalty pact between corporations and workers,

reinstating a new paternal corporate model, with corporations using strategies similar to early paternal capitalist models in which not just the worker is taken care of, but entire families are supported and encouraged into the firm and, in NB, the community.

## 8 Temporary Foreign Workers: Filling the Shortage with Cheap(er)? More Flexible Labour

*Wage labour is undergoing a profound transformation, signaled by the increasingly unstable terms on which people are hired across the world, and the growing range of forms of labour in industry and agriculture – from stable cores of wage work through contract and piece work to new forms of indentured, slave, and child labour – incorporated into global commodity chains under the restructuring of the global economy.*  
–Philip McMichael (1996, 40)

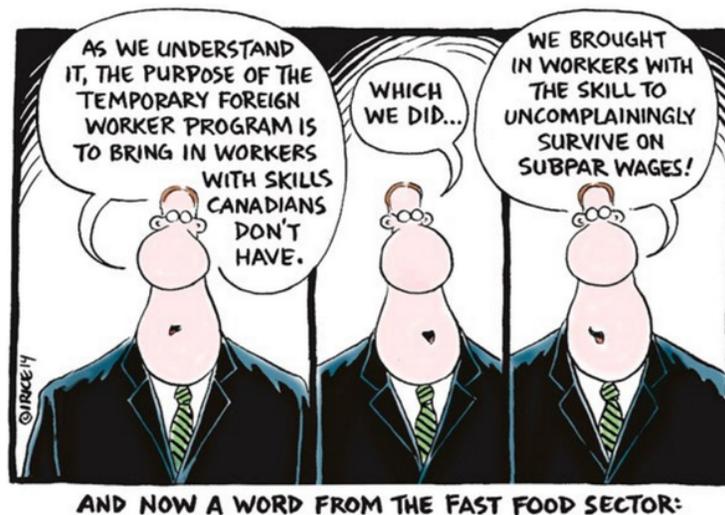


Photo Credit: Ingrid Rice, North Vancouver

### 8.1 Introduction

Building on the arguments in chapters 5, 6, and 7 that there is a significant link between the industrial (re)organization and labour shortages in Oceanside, this chapter looks at how the resulting labour shortage has been partially filled through use of the TFWP<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> This chapter draws from already published work (see Knott 2016).

Accessing workers through the TFWP program in this NB region has increased both segmentation and polarization of the workforce, but also contributed to increased precariousness within the local labour market and aided in decreased work quality and reduced incomes for all workers. Migration policies contain deep-seated gendered, and racialized, notions of specific groups of people migrating for work that have aided employer strategies to create a cheap (and immobile) labour force in Oceanside and elsewhere. In this chapter, I show that a new corporate structure (aided by new globalized financial systems) within aquaculture and capture processing is rhythmically aligned with labour migration policies (TFWP) that work within neoliberal political and economic environments to shuffle a significant amount of power and profit into the hands of corporations and away from workers.

The previous chapter demonstrated how employers are able to manufacture aspects of labour shortages. Relying on semi-structured interview data with key informants, community members, workers (including two workers from the TFWP), Canadian newspaper articles from 2012 to 2014, and, in a few sections, a comparison with findings from my BC research, this chapter looks at *how* the TFWP became a successful employment strategy in Oceanside leading up to 2012. The chapter begins with an overview of the racialized migrant labour force, including a small number of Vietnamese immigrants who worked in Oceanside plants in 2012. This workforce is representative of an immigrant workforce whose presence preceded the use of the TFWP. The Vietnamese workforce is connected to the TFWP in one plant specifically, through that community's attempts to bring family members in from Vietnam through the

program. The initial use of the TFWP is discussed next, specifically its connections to human resources managers across companies as a solution to labour issues in the area, as well as the industry in Atlantic Canada. Included is a discussion on the raced and gendered stereotypes that infuse who is recruited to work in what area of the plants and who is not. The next section looks at the migrant workers in more detail, drawing on data from worker interviews to understand their integration into the plants as newcomers, how they are perceived by management and other workers, and some of the issues and concerns that surround the use of the migrant workforce in the Oceanside plants that leave these workers in a vulnerable position. The impact on migrant workers as both temporary as well as permanent workers at Oceanside is then explored from the perspective of community business owners, who mention the TFWP in relation to the community in terms of an increase in multiculturalism, maintaining the population, effects on housing prices, and the significant increase in rental prices. Next, the TFWP is looked at more broadly in NB, including the number of migrant workers coming to work in seafood processing in NB and the National Occupation categories (NOC) through which they are brought in. This section concludes with the most recent changes, both positive and negative, to the TFWP that were brought in in 2014. The last section provides an overall discussion of the use of the TFWP in Oceanside in relation to the larger literature on migrant and immigrant labour in the Canadian context.

## **8.2 The Vietnamese Connection to Temporary Foreign Workers in Oceanside**

In 2012, all the plants in my area of study except for one smaller aquaculture plant had gone through the process of bringing in workers through the TFWP. This was not the first

time that workers from other countries had been recruited to work in the plants. Workers from Vietnam had been working in one of the capture plants since at least the late 1990s. However, these workers were not brought to Canada to work at the plant, but instead came to Canada as permanent residents (either through immigration, or more likely as refugees), and were recruited to work in the plant from the larger urban centre nearby:

*John: Actually, bringing in immigrant workers started a long time ago. [Name of capture plant] brought a lot of the Vietnamese people in.*

*Carrie: We have quite a bit of diversity, there's, um, I haven't really determined exactly where the origins, where a lot of these people are, but there are people from Vietnam, Uzbekistan, uh, Africa, Nepal, we have quite a diverse—*

*Interviewer: And how did you get those workers here?*

*Carrie: Uh the Vietnamese, I am not entirely sure how they first initially came, they were here when I was here, I think that up, they may have been some people that had come into from [name of nearest big city], obtained a position here, moved into the community, brought their families into the community and it's just sort of grown since there, since that, uh, a lot of our employees in particular that [come] from different countries, they often originate from [name of nearest big city].*

These Vietnamese workers became an established part of the local workforce of the capture plant. The original workforce in the capture plant that came from Vietnam would have come through the refugee process, or the permanent or landed immigrant process (now called the International Mobility Program), which uses a point system that favours more highly skilled applicants (Beine and Coulombe 2014; Marsden 2011). A wave of Vietnamese refugees came to Canada between 1979 and 1982, due to political unrest in Vietnam, of which five percent ended up settling in Atlantic Canada (Dorais et al. 2000). The 1991 Census shows that 250 Vietnamese were living in NB, and a report on the Vietnamese population that came in as refugees between 1979 and 1982 states that these workers were mostly uneducated, young, without preexisting family connections in

Canada, and had a hard time entering the labour market due to the recession in Canada in the 1980s (Dorais et al. 2000). Given employment constraints, some of these refugees may have sought work in the seafood processing plants in Oceanside.

As Carrie mentions above, hiring migrants from the neighbouring city was not uncommon. When the Vietnamese labour force was in place, the company began to bring in more Vietnamese workers through the TFWP. These workers desired to bring in their family members.

*Carrie: What we, this year, we have targeted is Vietnam. Okay, we were approached by some employees, some valuable employees that were looking for, they had heard that we were interested in this and so they had some family members that were really interested in coming in for the season.*

Through participant observation in the community, I gleaned that this permanent migrant workforce existed in all the plants to a small degree, but was not as significant a part of the labour force as the migrant workers who came in through the TFWP. What *was* a common occurrence was the use of family connections to recruit more immigrant workers through the TFWP.

### **8.3 Recruitment of a Temporary Migrant Workforce**

The initial idea of using the TFWP to bring workers into the fish plants in NB appears to have arisen through a human resources (HR) managers' group in the area. The identification and development of new labour pools was a human resources decision that was shared with other human resources managers, not just within seafood processing, but in other food-processing industries as well, as Andrew discusses below. The overlap among these industries is apparent when looking at the fluidity that increasingly exists

not just within the food processing industries, but in companies' human resource departments in general. For example, one plant manager explained how HR managers of businesses in the area met four times a year to share their challenges and strategies to address those challenges:

***Andrew:** [W]e do have an HR managers' group where some of the HR managers from the other plants get together four times a year and we will talk about things that are common to all of us, or problems and concerns, but I don't want to speak for their ship, you know, but I think if you talked to other ones you would find a lot of the same concerns or opinions that I do.*

***Interviewer:** Is that both aquaculture and the traditional fishery that talk, the HR people, or are you—*

***Andrew:** Yes, yes, because [NB Cannery], for example is in the herring industry. [Multinational Fish Farm] is in aquaculture, and they're there. [Name of chocolate factory] in [name of community close by] is represented there. We all have the same challenges in [Oceanside].*

HR managers talked about labour shortages<sup>14</sup> and the need to bring in workers from overseas as a way to fill this deficit. The use of multiple forms of migrant labour by the processing plants in this area is described by an interviewee below in response to my question asking whether they thought aquaculture had helped the area economically.

***Interviewer:** Do you think aquaculture has helped economically?*

***Diane:** Well there's a number of people that work there, so I would guess the answer would have to be yes. I think they both do, [Name of Herring Plant] as well, they have the women that pack the sardines, and the whole can-making component. The locals do work there, and they also have brought in workers from the Philippines primarily, and I also think there are some Chileans here as well.*

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14. It is interesting to note that while the term "local labour force" may be used, workers coming from overseas through the TFWP to work in the seafood processing plants are being counted as local workers. This came to light while I was interviewing plant managers about their labour force. There was some initial confusion on my part, because managers stated that the majority of their workforce was local. After further probing, I realized that managers included any workers who lived in the community, including workers they had brought in through the TFWP, as local workers. While industry and government reports state that x number of local people are employed in aquaculture, they do not state whether these workers have been brought in from outside of Canada, and who has been pushed out.

*Chile has quite an aquaculture, which [NB Cannery aquaculture subsidiary] used to have big operations in Chile as well, so there's also been people brought into the local and surrounding communities for both of those industries. Yeah, I suppose you would have to say yes.*

While I did not confirm the presence of any workers from Chile in the plants, migrant workers were being brought in from the Philippines, Vietnam, Romania, and Newfoundland during the time of the study. This strategy was evident in all the plants, including the chocolate processing plant. It has been argued that migrant labour is one of the few tools left to agrifood corporations to increase competitiveness and labour flexibility (Preibisch 2007; Sharma 2006), and as this dissertation has shown in previous chapters, this is not a new tool in the corporate toolbox.

Similar to the seafood processing plants in the area, the chocolate company received a \$300,000 forgivable loan, and a \$1.05 million repayable loan from the provincial government, in addition to a \$500,000 repayable loan from the ACOA, some of which was specifically allocated to create jobs in the area:

[Name of company and description of its product] has announced plans for an expansion that will include the purchase of new equipment to improve operations and is expected to create 40 new jobs within the next two years, in addition to its present 219 jobs. . . . “Under the Greater Opportunity: New Brunswick’s Prosperity Plan, we are encouraging New Brunswick companies to be globally competitive and export-oriented,” Lord [Premier of NB 1999-2006] said. “[Name of company] has a long-standing reputation as a national leader in the confectionary industry. This new project will create jobs and strengthen the prosperity of the [name of community] area, while allowing the company to increase production and sell more of its products to large customers in the United States.” (██████████ Tides 2003)

Whether or not forty new jobs were created, the company, citing local labour shortages in the area, brought in workers from overseas to work in the plant. The company was the first plant in the area to bring in workers through the TFWP and received negative

backlash for the low wages they were paying workers.

*Mandy: I got really annoyed at [name of plant], and I got told off, but, you know, when you are right, you're right. But [name of plant], was paying 7.45/h for labour. It was before minimum wage went up, minimum wage was \$7.45 or \$7.50, so they were complaining they couldn't get anyone to come work and they were going to get these Temporary Foreign Workers. And I was, \$7.45, even with two people working, by the time you paid your taxes, you're only getting \$10 an hour and that's with a man and a woman working. So I called up [name of owner] and I said, why don't you try living on \$600 bucks a month? And that's going to pay your mortgage, your car, your meals out, your hydro, your this, so . . . and I did the math, you know a blind man could see it, you got a family working forty hours a week and only getting ten dollars a hour, and no one can do it. If you started paying proper wages perhaps you would start getting workers. . . . Why would you bring them over here and make them poor, where they can't access social programs like welfare, EI, whatever for your \$7.50 an hour, you should damn well be ashamed.*

Mandy noted later in the interview that the plant did raise wages in response to local media pressure, but it also brought in workers through the TFWP. In 2012, twenty percent of its staff was composed of migrant workers brought in through the TFWP (CBC News 2012).

The success of this one company spurred the Multinational Fish Farm plant to follow suit. It began to bring in workers through the program after it reduced the wages in all of its plants following consolidation of the aquaculture companies in the area. The other two plants soon followed suit, but recruited employees from different countries. While the Multinational Fish Farm brought in workers from both Romania and the Philippines, Lobster Plant brought in workers only from the Philippines, using a labour recruiter suggested by a lobster company in PEI. NB Cannery brought in workers from Vietnam, mostly targeting families of their established Vietnamese workers. Using families to bring in additional workers was a tactic used by all the plants, as mentioned

above:

**Belinda:** *First when I came here, so almost five years ago, we were right in the middle of bringing workers in from Romania. Um, so, that would have been, I got here in November, I think our first group came in either December or January. Um, it was like twenty at that time. Um, we've done a couple of recruitments since, so we do have probably, at [name of plant], probably got, again I'll say, fifty or sixty across both shifts. So what happens, when you know, as you can appreciate, we bring in the first twenty and some of them are husbands and wives, or just husbands with their wives and kids left back, so after they get established, they are bringing their families over. So, you know, sometimes they bring their families, so their wife comes to work with us.*

**Interviewer:** *Okay, so do you have a lot of families in the plant?*

**Belinda:** *Yes we do.*

**Interviewer:** *Okay, is that extended family.*

**Belinda:** *Yup, yes.*

**Interviewer:** *Why did you choose Romania?*

**Belinda:** *I don't know. Again, that was before I came, you know that was already in place, I don't know. I think, and again this is kinda one of the things I've heard since coming into the company, I think in the past they did go to the Philippines, cause at our, uh, we've got a net mending place, [name of company], and there is a lot of people from the Philippines that work there. And I think that was prior to the Romanians.*

**Andrew:** *But also, we found it necessary to hire temporary foreign workers. In order to meet, because the plant was being suffocated, we didn't have enough workers unless, like I told you, part of my thing when I came here three years ago, we had a lovely plant here, lots of market for our product, we just couldn't produce enough of it once it, like I said, keep everyone happy. So we had to make some changes and, uh, management had been speaking with another client over in Prince Edward Island who had gone with the temporary foreign worker route and they asked me to look into it, and we did, we tried it, they were great workers. Fit in great with the other workers here, improved morale. Because they really wanted to come to work, and some of the other people who were, let's face it, overworked because we were understaffed, really didn't want to be here so much, so anyway it has really been a win-win situation for us, so much that this past year we applied and got a few more.*

The managers describe the success of the program and bringing in more workers year after year, until a significant portion of their workforce consisted of workers acquired via the TFWP. One plant estimated about fifty percent of the workforce was brought in

through the TFWP.

*Interviewer: Okay, so how many do you have then.*

*Andrew: Seventy-two.*

*Interviewer: Okay.*

*Andrew: Yeah, so about half the workforce at this point is actually made up of–*

*Interviewer: And you bring in more every year, is that how you do that?*

*Andrew: Well we have only done it for the last three . . . we applied for thirty-five but some get denied, it's not a shoe-in that everyone is going to get accepted, and then it was fifteen, I believe, and three were denied, so we got twelve more this year.*

Andrew's experience mirrored that of the other plants, with plant managers “trying it out” for one year with a small number of workers, and then reapplying annually because of the positive experience.

Although the exact numbers have not been documented, a key informant in the area of my research suggested that by 2012, about four hundred TFWs had been brought in to work in the area. Out of these four hundred, the fish processing industry had brought in roughly 350.

(Pseudonym not used to protect the participant further.)

*X: Most of the newcomers . . . work in the seafood facilities.*

*Interviewer: Do you have numbers on that?*

*X: We don't have concrete numbers on the number of people working, but we have estimates, so we have an estimate [of] around approximately 250 people in the [name of region], who are newcomers, who are working in the fish plants. And then we have, sorry, more than, it's more like 350, not 250, and then we have approximately fifty people working in other industry jobs in the [name of local community close by] area. So we have approximately four hundred people in the [name of area].*

The number is notable when considering that four hundred jobs is a significant number of jobs in this small region of NB, especially when plants have received funding to retain or create jobs (see previous chapters), and also given the area's high unemployment rate at

the time of the study.

A key informant explained that when companies bring migrant workers into Canada, the companies provide them with transportation to Canada and transportation home when their contract term is up (so, return airfare). This is required when bringing in low-skilled workers through the TFWP in NB (New Brunswick 2011). Normally, managers would have workers fly into a major city, such as Toronto, Vancouver, or Montreal, where, if employers had provided enough time (through scheduling their flight transfers), workers would get their work permits before flying into NB. If they were not able to get their work permits before they landed in NB, the employer would stop at the immigration office on the way from the airport, and process their papers to get the work permits. Ryan explains that companies that bring in temporary migrant workers through the TFWP agree to specific conditions (return airfare, health insurance, fair wages, and accommodations) when they apply for workers through the Labour Market Opinion, or LMO.

***Ryan:** They [companies] would not be able to get the LMO at minimum wage. One of the things is they have to pay fairly so they can get an LMO, and part of the LMO, there are certain conditions they have to meet. For example, they have to pay health insurance, they have to pay tickets to come and go back, not just to come, but to go back, too, they have to provide housing for the first two weeks.*

***Interviewer:** It's just two weeks, that's it?*

***Ryan:** It depends on the LMO, in most cases I see it's the first two weeks, or three weeks or four weeks, so companies have gone so far that they have purchased houses, and then have subsidized rents to their employees, but in the general market rent has gone up.*

The managers all spoke of providing housing for the migrant workers for a specific amount of time when they first arrived. Housing was either in company-owned dwellings, or companies set up rental housing for workers, and this varied by company:

***Interviewer:** Okay, what do you have to provide them when they come? Do you have to provide them with transportation or do you have to give them housing?*

***Andrew:** We have to help them locate housing, but we went one step further and provided for them.*

***Interviewer:** What kind of housing do you have for them? Did you buy a house or—*

***Andrew:** Actually, we bought two houses; also, we have a bunk house here on site.*

***Belinda:** I know first when they come here we have housing and that kind of thing around and everything like that is taken care of.*

***Interviewer:** How long is the housing provided, do you know?*

***Belinda:** I am going to say three months. It seems to be by the time they are here and try to get organized. I know the company puts a lot of effort into trying to get them settled, and they'll help with trying to bring their families over, you know, help them with all their paperwork and all that sort of thing, helping them get their kids registered in school, you know, the whole thing. They really make sure they bring people in, they really make sure they are well taken care of before they kind of pull back and say okay, now you're on your own. You know. There's a lot of support there for sure.*

***X:** The companies are taking really good care of them, in terms of finding them the appropriate housing for example before they arrive. Before the multicultural centre was ever even put into place, the company was providing the settlement needs to their employees. . . . So they would find them the house, they would give them loans to buy cars, so they would be mobile.*

***Interviewer:** So they loaned them money? Did they charge them interest?*

***X:** I don't know, I don't think so because the workers were quite happy, they would just pay off the loan through the job. So they did that, they helped them buy cars, with their insurance policy, with driving lessons. When you move to a rural region, it is not like moving to a urban area, where you have everything easily accessible and you have a lot to choose from. Here it is the opposite, you have very little and that has, you have to work with what you have, and sometimes you don't have anything.*

I have no concrete evidence of migrant workers being forced to pay for their rent out of their pay; the only reference to employers creating a situation of indentured labour through a debt process was in the interview above, where it was pointed out that employers were lending money to the migrant workers for car loans, and then docking the repayment from their wages. Whether this happened in other areas is unclear.

Workers in this area of NB in the fish plants have usually been coming for one

year, and then have their contracts extended, and many then apply for residency through the Provincial Nominee Program. Normally TFWs are allowed to stay for four years (this was extended from a one-year limit to two in 2007, and then from two to four in 2011, and then reduced back to one year in 2014), and must not return to Canada for four years. Temporary migrant workers can apply for permanent residency through their employer, as some provinces, such as NB, have agreements with the federal government that allow temporary workers to apply for permanent residency through their work. This is called “two-step migration” (Hennebry 2010, 62).

The program in NB is called the Skilled Worker Applicant with Employer Support, and workers who work in some low-skill occupations are eligible. Workers applying through this program, similar to the federal immigration program, are graded on a point system, based on age, language ability, education, adaptability (which is based on having family, education, employment, positive LMO, and job skills), and work experience. They must score a minimum of fifty points to be eligible. In 2012, official language requirements were added to the qualifying guidelines, and applicants must now undergo language testing (New Brunswick 2014). A woman who came into NB through the TFWP<sup>15</sup> describes how LMOs work now, and how it was different for her when she came to Canada years earlier:

**Interviewer:** *Is it the Temporary Foreign Workers' Program?*

**Kim:** *It is supposed to be.*

**Interviewer:** *Is it the low-skilled one? Can they come in for two years, or can they stay longer?*

**Kim:** *They come in for a certain amount of a year, and if I am not mistaken, then the company can renew their contract, if they like them. So that is what they are*

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<sup>15</sup> Kim was one of the two participants I interviewed who entered Canada through the TFWP.

*doing, they keep renewing their contract. Then after a certain number of years here they can apply for residency, but it's, uh, provincial nominee program. The nominee program is the province nominates you to be a resident, quicker than if you apply for residency.*

**Interviewer:** *So they are allowing the workers to stay here?*

**Kim:** *Yeah, the majority of them, if I am not mistaken, are immigrating. See, it used to be, Canada a few years when you came here, 'cause that is what I was doing, a temporary worker. Before I came here, I don't know how long, was that, they suggest that you come here and work and they just give you, just keeping renewing your work, just like Saudi Arabia. That's what they do. You just keep renewing your contract. Then if they don't want you anymore, you have to go home. You don't have no future in here. And all these immigrants, all these workers fought for it. If you stay here for three years with the same employer you can apply for residency. At my time, at first you could apply for an open permit. You could work anywhere that you want, okay. If you're a nanny, you don't have to be a nanny, you can work anywhere that you want.*

**Interviewer:** *Do you have to have a sponsor?*

**Kim:** *Yeah, your employer has to be [it]. After two years working in an open permit, you don't have to have a [sponsor] as long as you worked with that same employer two years. Sometimes it's sticky. And if you don't, if you don't, if one year you work with one employer, the second year you work with that employer, you have to have good reason why you left that employer. And then for that two years, they want you, in my time they want you to go to school, they want you to have so much money in the bank before they even let you have an open permit. At that time. At my time. And after a year on an open permit you apply for residency. And then you'll get that, no problem. It's a total of four years in Canada without going anywhere. Because if you go anywhere, they subtract that number of days away from the total years that you're here. And after you're here as a permanent resident, I think I had to wait three, years, yeah, you're right, seven years [before you become a citizen], three years to apply for citizenship. But you don't have to. If you don't want to be a citizen, you don't have to. I can just be a resident, but I can still keep my [citizenship] passport. I would have the same right as you guys have, but I cannot vote.*

Kim describes how when she came as a temporary worker she was able to apply for an open permit after working for the same employer for three years. If her employer sponsored her, she would have to keep working for him for another two years as part of the process of acquiring her open permit. While she was able to work for any employer after two years, the relationship with her employer for those two years was vital in her

being able to apply for her permanent residency, and any change in employer had to be explained. The TFWP for workers in 2012 tied the migrant workers to the one employer (in this case, the fish processing company) only, and these workers were unable to work for another company.

According to managers in Oceanside, most temporary migrant workers took advantage of the provincial nominee program to gain permanent residency. In the following passage, a manager describes how workers are chosen from among the applications they receive, as well as how long they bring them in for, and the tendency of these workers to apply for permanent residency:

*Andrew: What we did was, uh, I was given a lot of resumes of people because, there is a lot more of them, easy to pick thirty, I looked for people who had some training, because they do, maybe they worked in a big slaughter area in the Philippines, but they still have to take that food operation. Some other ones, say like, I know that we have here some, uh, fish mongering, for lack of a better word, so they are used to working with all kinds of different fish. The other thing is that it is, you have to be very careful with what we do, and how we prepare the food, but it's not rocket science. It can be learned, you know, by a lot of different people. Some people are better at certain things than others.*

*Interviewer: Okay, I'll have to look into it, then. I am not really sure how it all works. So have the workers gotten residency, then?*

*Andrew: Not yet. But they are in the process . . . the first-year group.*

Andrew points out that the workers hired through the TFWP are hand-picked to come work in the plants, and that he puts effort into choosing workers who have some experience with fish. He states, “[S]ome people are better at certain things than others.” Managers I interviewed all discussed how they chose specific workers, based on gender and/or race or ethnic stereotypes, to work in their plants.

### **8.3.1 The Foreigner: How Race and Gender Intersect in the TFWP**

When managers discussed whom they chose to hire for different positions in the plants, they often used stereotypes of specific groups of workers from specific geographical areas:

*Andrew: And like I said, it goes back to the Newfoundland guys and the loading and unloading the trucks, and you know, we had plenty to do the chores that, and I am not saying that only women can do, but I am just saying that traditionally they are better equipped with their hands, you know, they worked in, uh, a lot of them worked in a place that did laptop screens, so they were very dexterous, so when it came time to pick meat out of a shell, shoot. And in fact, we have a thing, if we think that people are doing too much talking on a line, we will go in with a bowl, kind of thing, and you time it to see how long it takes, so we know pretty much this one here, she can do so many pounds an hour if you calculate, and what we found out was that within three days anyway, these people were doing it as quick as our fastest who have been working here for years. They are just very good, just very dexterous with their fingers.*

Here, Andrew explains how, when he recruited workers from NL, he chose men to unload the trucks, and women to extract lobster meat, and then he starts talking about the female Filipino workers, who are chosen to work in the plant because of their previous experience with working with small parts (laptop screens), which, in combination with their very dexterous fingers, makes them really good at picking lobster meat out of the shell. He backs this up with the empirical evidence of timing the women as a correctional measure when they are chatting too much (I am assuming this means their productivity goes down), and thus, women are timed to see how fast they really can work. Drawing on the stereotype that Asian women have small and dexterous fingers to explain how fast the women are able to work, rather than thinking they are motivated by concerns over losing their jobs, he ignores the power dynamics that exist for workers coming in through the TFWP, with employers holding power over their ability to work in Canada and to gain permanent residency.

Carrie, in a similar fashion, quickly sorts the workers by race/ethnicity when considering her hiring practices.

***Interviewer:** So the other companies bring in workers mostly from Romania and the Philippines?*

***Carrie:** Yes, yes that's correct.*

***Interviewer:** Would you choose one over the other?*

***Carrie:** It is difficult for me to say for sure, there are definitely positives on both sides, um, I think it would depend on the type of position that we are looking to fill. Um, you know, our, what we've learned, or what we've, so far have the information we have gathered, the piecework jobs, you know, you have to be very good with your hand-eye coordination and dexterity is absolutely essential, you're getting paid based on what you pack so you have to be able to pack the fish as quickly as you can, as safely as you can, so you know, being, having someone who has a lot of dexterity in their hands is certainly valuable, so in some respects the Asian community can be an asset on that, cause they're often, you know they have daintier hands, they're familiar with that kind of work, that is something that is very, very common in their countries, so if we were looking for piecework I think we would probably look at, or I would probably suggest maybe looking in the Philippines for that. If we were looking for, um, other positions throughout the plant, not to say we wouldn't put someone from Asia in a different position other than piecework but, um, then we might look at maybe Romania, for another example.*

Again, Asian workers are labeled as having dexterous fingers, and are familiar with piecework, which is supposedly “very, very common in their countries.” Carrie states she would consider hiring workers from Romania for the other positions in the plant. The racially and ethnically based stereotyping that infuses hiring practices for temporary foreign workers has also been shown to influence occupational health and safety risks, as documented by Premji et al. (2014). In the NB case, it is building on the already gendered division of labour that has existed within the Canadian seafood processing industry since its inception, with women comprising the majority of plant workers working directly in processing (see earlier chapters).

We now see in seafood processing plants a higher proportion of men than in the past (see table 1.1), with managers in NB (similar to BC) citing, on average, a sixty/forty gender split in plants:

*Interviewer: Okay, and is it mostly women or men that work in the plants or is it split, do you have a—*

*Jacob: I would almost say, it's probably about sixty/forty, uh sixty percent women, forty percent men.*

*Interviewer: Okay, um, for the jobs in the plants, is there a gender division of labour in job tasks, like are there mostly women doing certain jobs and men doing others?*

*Jacob: Not so much as it used to be, um, again, in the past the women did the fine work, the trimming, the things you figured the men didn't have the patience for and women were better at it anyway, but, and the men did the lifting and the heavier work.*

*Interviewer: What is the number of workers that are men and women?*

*Belinda: Uh, that's a good question. Certainly more ladies that we get at [name of other plant] than men.*

*Interviewer: Okay, is it different at the other one?*

*Belinda: Uh, dressed head-on is more men, it's—*

*Interviewer: Why is that?*

*Belinda: It's definitely a more demanding job, You know I like to say it's more physically, everything is more heavier and that sort of thing. So there is a number of women that work there as well, but it certainly seems to be a more male-dominant work area for sure.*

*Interviewer: If you could give a percentage of the split would you say it was—*

*Belinda: Uh, probably next door at [name of plant] I would say sixty/forty ladies over men.*

*Interviewer: Okay, and at the one in [name of other plant]?*

*Belinda: Probably twenty/eighty.*

*Interviewer: And is that including women that would be in the offices and stuff?*

*Belinda: No, that would be just production.*

In an interview with a plant manager, I noted that the increase in men working in traditionally female-dominated jobs in the plants had racial undertones. By this I mean that it was racialized men who first crossed the gender barrier to working in female jobs, which then opened this up to other men entering the plants to work:

**Interviewer:** *What about changes to men and women? Changes in the plant?*

**Carrie:** *Yeah, and that happened a number of years ago. Men started packing sardines for the first time, and that was just totally a women's job. I think that started mostly with, I think there was some Chinese or Japanese people that moved here, that did that. They were very good at it, yeah, so they, and then since then it has kind of caught on with more summer students, boys will take that on, whereas before it was girl's job, so to speak. I don't know the ratio, I do know now it is not a novelty, if you walk through the plant it is something you do see. The other part of the industry, as far as the weir fishing, that is totally a men's thing, as far as I know, men are Captains of the ship and all that are men. Aquaculture, I think as far as out on the sites and feeding the fish and all that, I know that there is girls in the summer time, and I know that there is women that work in the hatcheries. I don't think it's been a revolutionary thing, where women are now doing these jobs, I think that it's kind of insidious and the main thing would be the fish packing and the feeding the fish. As far as the "men's men" kind of work, it still seems that it's the men that still do that.*

**Bree:** *And another really big change when I first started working here, you wouldn't catch a man scissor packing, it was just not done, it was just not done, you wouldn't catch a man dead scissor packing, and then the Vietnamese people came, well they didn't care I don't think. I think it started with one man seeing how much money his wife made, and he said he wanted to do it, 'cause truly, when they first started doing it, it was the place where you made the most money, they still to this day on the S.A.P., they make more money than anyone, we make more money than the maintenance man, we make more money than, if you're a fast packer.*

**Interviewer:** *So there was potential there?*

**Bree:** *Yeah there was, so they saw that potential, the Vietnamese men, and they took, and they, to everyone's surprise they made just as much money as the women did, some of them made more money than some of the women did. And the next thing you know, it's started where the students, the boys, they started putting them on packing. And now there are lots of men packing. On the S.A.P. line.*

**Interviewer:** *Do the men and women do lots of all the jobs now?*

**Bree:** *I have never seen the women do maintenance yet.*

While the scissor packing was a high-paying job for those women (and now men) who could keep up an intensely brutal pace, these jobs are now being replaced with cheaper hourly paid positions through increased mechanization in the plant (see previous chapter).

The integration of racialized workers in the plant has opened up space for men in traditionally female-dominated jobs, whereas the jobs that have been traditionally male-

dominated have stayed that way. While there is incentive for male workers to work in female-dominated jobs, because they were piecework, and allowed a worker to make a lot of money, this is slowly being removed as an option in the plant. The overall results have been decreasing numbers of women in the plants, with an almost equal split between men and women in most of the plants. I asked plant managers for breakdowns of their workforce by gender, and country of origin, but no one provided it beyond the general information in the interviews.

#### **8.4 The Narrative of “Good Workers”: Manufacturing the Shortage**

This section adds substantial evidence to the argument that use of the TFWP is not about a labour shortage per se, but about a shortage of the type of employee the plants are looking for. The traits of the workers coming from overseas fit the “ideal worker” model defined by managers (and ultimately by large corporations’ bottom lines), while domestic workers both admired the work ethic of migrant workers, and felt that they were provided with special treatment.

When I talked to managers about why they started to avail themselves of the TFWP, they explained that they were unable to find enough workers. But after further discussion about applications, it became apparent that there was a specific type of worker that employers were looking to hire, and that it was not a matter of lack of applications. There was thus a connection between managers desiring a specific type of workforce (immobile, vulnerable, cheap), and the types of workers they were able to get through the TFWP. The three managers of the three plants that use the TFWP discussed their labour shortage issues:

**Interviewer:** Okay. So why did you start bringing in workers from Romania?

**Belinda:** Uh, we just couldn't get, we needed workers and couldn't get. . . . Nope, couldn't hire. Even now, we're not hiring now, but I did talk to HR last week just to see, you know, what our pool of applicants was like, (makes sound \*pfft\*) we don't have any right now.

**Interviewer:** Really?

**Belinda:** But we just did a big hire, like I said for night shift. We just hired twenty-five people, probably over the last two months we hired twenty-five people to put on a night shift, um, we got some really good people. It took us a while to get them, but we got them. And right now, like I said, when I checked last week there was no applicants.

**Andrew:** So it keeps you busy between this and, so I don't want you to think that, yeah, we just do the temporary thing, that's just 'cause that's out of necessity we do that because otherwise I can just not simply hire enough, and keep them here.

**Carrie:** Uh, generally it has been a challenge to find, lately in the last few years, to find people that are, that would commit to this type of industry. So we have certainly been faced with that type of challenge, to find people that are interested, one of the challenges too is that we are seasonal, so a lot of people are looking for full-time year-round work, so because we're seasonal, that in itself is a challenge we face, so um, so often, that's why I say, people are putting in applications because they need to apply for positions but they are not really interested in what we are doing, and that sort of thing.

Carrie specifically identifies the seasonality of the plant as an issue in finding enough workers, which is striking when seasonal workers have been specifically targeted in the plant and confronted with losing their seniority unless they live permanently in the area (see chapter 7). Comments such as these speak to the ways labour shortages are influenced by employer practices that do not match the narratives employers use about labour shortages in their plants.

Overall, labour shortages in the area seemed to be more evident at the Multinational Fish Farm processing plant (compared to the other three plants), in terms of actual number of applicants. Similar to my findings in BC, aquaculture processing plants had a harder time just getting workers to apply than capture processing plants, which

seemed to have a lot of applicants for jobs – just not from the kind of people they were looking to employ. Carrie and Andrew talk about the large number of applications, but just not from the right people:

*Carrie: We do get a relatively good number of applications come in, it can be a bit of a challenge 'cause often it's difficult to find people that really want this type of work, um, you know, some of our challenges are finding people that have a good solid work history, you know, often, we're getting applications from people who've had difficulties in prior positions, so that can be a bit of a time-consuming situation, trying to go through those types of things.*

*Andrew: [T]he first year here that I interviewed a hundred and ninety-nine people and the next year I interviewed two hundred and, I know how close is that, and this year I am on track. This is what, September? and I am at a hundred and fifty-some now . . . and this is not including the temporary workers or the people that return year after year after year from NL.*

Clearly the issue with labour shortages in the seafood processing plants in Oceanside that use the TFWP is not necessarily that workers are not applying for jobs in the plants, but more that managers are having difficulty finding the “right” workers.

Managers mentioned issues with retention, or loyalty to the plant, stating that workers would stop coming to work when they had enough hours to apply for EI, when they realized they did not like working in the plant environment (too hot, too cold), when they realized they had to have a criminal check done, or when travel back and forth became too much. As Belinda states, the processing plants have worked hard to keep the right people:

*Belinda: Uh, first when I came, it [labour turnover] seemed to be quite high. Again, we've worked really hard to retain people, keep the right people.*

Some of the issues with retention may be attributed to the deteriorating working condition that workers identified in the last chapter. Yet there were clearly people willing

to work in the plants.

#### **8.4.1 “Good Worker” = Exploited Worker**

What managers seemed to be looking for in terms of ideal employees became more apparent when they talked about the workers coming in through the TFWP.

*Carrie: What we have learned from other employers in the community is that employees from foreign countries, they are eager for any work, whether it is repetitive type of work, factory setting, it doesn't matter to them, they want the work, they want as many hours as they can, the loyalty is there, the dedication is there, and that is something that we face on a regular basis locally is finding that dedication, finding that commitment.*

*Belinda: My experience with the people from the Philippines, excellent, workers, uh, really want to, hard workers, really want to do a good job. They'll work the extra if you need them, you know, they are always looking for the extra to do, uh you know really good experience, so you know, we have had probably you know, some not so good experiences with a few, but no different than our locals, you know. Over all, I got to say, really good experience.*

*Ryan: One of the reasons I think was in speaking, this is my opinion, it's my opinion but I have had conversations with, not aquaculture, but fishery-based companies that have hired newcomers, and they say it is the best thing that has happened to them. They say productivity had gone up, the workforce morale has gone up, and they have been more productive.*

The words that are used in these interviews explain why the migrant workers are considered to be such good workers. These words include *loyalty, dedication, commitment, extra, productivity, morale*. These workers work hard, and why would they not? They are removed from family, friends, and community obligations, and are here to make money. In addition, they can be sent home if the employer decides to do this, so it would make sense that they would work hard, be dedicated, do extra, and help increase productivity. Kim, who originally came to Canada as a temporary migrant and is now a permanent resident, expands on what is different about the migrant workforce versus the

local one:

*Kim: There is a lot of ethnic people, in the plant there are some, I am not sure if they are Filipinos, but I know there are some ethnics. For some reason they are not hiring local people. Well, I know why, but–*

*Interviewer: Well, why do you think?*

*Kim: 'Cause they [foreign workers] work hard, they don't complain, they work as many hours as they want them to, and they are not going to say nothing, and they are just content getting paid. Which is true. I agree to that one. If I am in the predicament I would work, I use to work in a textile [mill] in Nova Scotia, if my supervisor asked who wants to stay, abruptly, like that minute, like that afternoon, he wants to know who wants to stay a couple of hours, I would be the first person to say yeah, I'll stay. The rest of them would say . . . ahhh, I don't know, and then they would stay just because. So I think that's why. And not many Canadians want to work, especially aquaculture, I don't think they pay that much money. That's what I heard. They have crazy hours too; that's why.*

Managers were clearly impressed with how hard the workers they brought in through the TFWP worked. These people would not just work hard every day, they would work overtime, anytime, without complaint, and at the lower wages now offered, thus making them “good workers.” Yet what seems to be missing from the characterization of these people as hard workers is their position as captive labourers, tied to one employer, removed from family and friends, possibly trying to gain residency status. The structural position puts pressure on these workers to work harder. They also have no other employment options within Canada, and therefore would be less likely to say no to anything asked of them.

Viviane, a temporary migrant worker, explained how workers from the Philippines were there to *work*, and they wanted to work more than eighty hours every two weeks if they could. While the NB Employment Act does not specify any restriction on the number of hours worked in a day, week, or month (unless you are a child, or in retail and it is a Sunday), employers are required to pay time-and-a-half for anything

beyond forty-four hours a week (New Brunswick 1982).<sup>16</sup> Below, Viviane states that she was not allowed to work more than eighty hours in two weeks. She was, however, allowed to work extra shifts by working at both the seafood processing plant and the net-mending plant, owned by the same company. This may mean that the company she was working for was avoiding paying Viviane (and other migrant workers) overtime by taking workers from the net-mending plant and moving them over to the seafood processing plant when they were in need of a surplus labour force:

*Viviane: From two years until now, so that is our work, mending or repairing the net that broke. So that is our work today and then when we have. . . . Our time is, um, what is it called, continental shift, so three days on two days off we need, mostly the Filipinos need more work so our company has extra work to give us, so sometimes we work in the [name] fish plant and sometimes we work in [other fish plant name]. If what the plant need, in fish plant, where we get it, we work, but mostly we work at the [name of plant] at the night, because their schedule is the nighttime. So all of the Filipinos are ready, because we need money to send to our families, so we must have an extra hour's nap, because our plant, we just work eighty hours for two weeks, last time, almost a year we can get more hours, because they want us to work. But when the government says just eighty hours per two weeks. So, that is why our, what you call it, our department said that we must have to work just until eighty hours, so you don't. If you work for more hours, so not in our shop, but you could work in the fish plant.*

*Interviewer Okay, so because it's not part of that eighty.*

*Viviane: Yes.*

*Interviewer: I see, okay. So that is how you get more hours?*

*Viviane: How we get more hours. Mostly the Filipinos need more hours [laughs].*

Viviane's situation of working in both the net-mending and the fish processing plants was also mentioned by a plant manager, who explained that workers from the Philippines were brought in to work in the net-mending department, but some of these workers are moved to the seafood processing plants, as Viviane explained, when production is high:

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16. The NB Employment act is different from the Canadian Labour Code, which specifies an average of eighty hours per two weeks, to a maximum of ninety-eight hours

*Interviewer: So do you still have workers from the Philippines in the plant?*

*Belinda: Yes. Yup. Not so many over here, we do have some but not so many. Most of those, at that time when they recruited, I imagine they were probably getting their [name of net mending plant] net mending division going. So that is probably where the bulk of those workers went. Since then some of them probably migrated into the processing plant. Again, like I said, in the past two weeks we have had a lot of overtime, we have also ask for volunteers from the other divisions, so those guys always want to come up and get some extra hours as well, so.*

This process of using one workforce in two workplaces not only allows workers coming in through the TFWP to work more hours than if they were only working in one workplace, it also saves companies money, as they have access to one labour pool for two workplaces, negating the need for a surplus labour pool (and also possibly overtime pay). The details of how payment works in this situation are unclear: Do workers who have worked their maximum hours at the net-mending plant, who then go and work extra shifts in the fish plant, get paid overtime hours for this work? Or are they paid a regular week's wage when they switch to a different work environment? This is another example of how the TFWP can potentially exploit workers.

The qualitative aspect of the labour shortage was really made apparent in my discussion with the manager at Small Fish Farm, which does not have labour recruitment or retention issues, despite its location in the same community, and recruiting from the same labour pool as both NB Cannery and Multinational Fish Farm. There has been no need for this company to use the TFWP. As workers described in the previous chapter, this company pays significantly higher wages than the other aquaculture plant, it offers full benefits, and has a better working environment.

*Interviewer: Um, okay. How do you hire workers here? Like how do you recruit workers?*

*Jacob: Um, basically to be honest, people like working here, so it hasn't been a real difficult thing to do, so mostly we've got a stock of applications, and when a position is up, we go through those applications and we'll hire the best-qualified, you know, the one we think is the best person to do the job. So they'll come in for an interview process and then we'll talk to them and see what their attitude is like and if we think it's going to be a good fit for the type of job that we need.*

*Interviewer Okay, do you have problems with retention at all with workers?*

*Jacob: No, nope, and uh that is because people by and large like stability, and they know that they are going to get, you know, their basically forty hours a week, fifty-two weeks a year. . . but what you see in this aquaculture industry is a core group of people, and they are not going to go anywhere, and if they are happy where they are at, they are going to stay where they are at.*

This plant's situation, with better pay, rate-of-pay increase, benefits, and work environment, and, according to the interview, no labour shortage or recruitment issues, sheds light on the questionable nature of claims about an actual labour shortage in this area and industry. It suggests the real problem may be a "good job" shortage more than anything else. However, this plant's NL workforce was comprised of those who had moved to NB, and did not commute.

The purported labour shortage in Oceanside has allowed these companies to bring in workers through the TFWP, thus introducing a new labour force into the seafood processing plants. Workers of various ages, genders, ethnicities, and races are now working together in the plants, which, as the last chapter showed, also were, increasingly, places of poor work quality, and high stress and anxiety, at least for some workers. In the next section, I look at the workforce composition dynamics among the workers.

#### ***8.4.2 Workforce Dynamics: Merging Immobile and Mobile Workers within the Workplace***

The workforce in the seafood processing plants in Oceanside in 2012 was a mixture of local workers (including a small population of Vietnamese workers), seasonally migrant

NL workers, immigrant workers, and temporary migrant workers. Darren, one of the business owners I talked to who grew up in the area, described the multinational make-up of the plants:

***Darren:** Oh yeah. And that's for, [Herring Plant], [Multinational Fish Farm Plant], [name of Herring and Multinational Fish Farm] are the big ones because they employ the most people. You know, it's a joke around here that you can hold a UN meeting at any of these buildings, because at one time you went through here you knew just about everybody that was here, and now you, it's a lot of Romanians, uh, Orientals of some sort, I am not sure what nationality they are, but they bring them in by the boatloads to work here.*

In a similar vein, a news story about the capture plant's use of the TFWP to employ workers describes the inside of the plant:

I found groups of Filipino men managing claws coming out of the cooker and cracking the shells in preparation for picking. Trays of cracked claws are stacked and then move over to the picking line and transit a conveyor belt surrounded by a mix of [Oceanside] residents and Filipino women. On the day we were there, their fast hands worked to serrate claw and knuckle meat that is then bagged, vacuum packed and sealed. (Tselikis 2012)

The changes in the composition of the workforce were discussed by the local workers in the plants, as well as by the NL workers who had watched the composition shift overtime.

Interviewees were, in the majority of cases, respectful of the workers coming from overseas. Susan described migrant workers as hard workers.

***Susan:** Oh yes, there was Vietnamese, and we still have Vietnamese, very hard workers, they are fast workers, very devoted workers, and we love them to death, they are just like us. And before, its sounds weird, but [name of town] was all white, and when they started coming in it was, it was just the outside world coming in and we have blacks now, and you know, but they went over to Romania last year and tried to recruit, but it didn't pan out. I guess they weren't successful. I know the [aquaculture] company has been successful. When they do bring these people in, they're workers. And if I was a company and I could see that these people are workers and they don't complain, and that's the thing. Canadians complain. And the foreign workers are so grateful to have a job that they'll do anything. And I can see their point, you know.*

Susan notes they are devoted and do not complain, and she directly compares them to Canadian workers, who do complain. Interestingly, no one in the interviews attributed migrant workers' hard work to the specific nature of the program they were brought in under, or, for permanent residents, to the fact they were trying to bring in their families through the same program. For instance, John suggest that their work ethic comes from the fact that the work here is better than the work they would be doing back in their home countries:

*John: I find them very hard workers. For instance, from starting out to now, some of them are top producers in what they pack in a day because they are very dedicated to what they do. And like I say there was some Filipino, and again I find them very hard workers and it doesn't matter what the work is. There is a lot of times, it's better than where they came from. So it's improvement. So they have always worked very hard.*

Both John and Susan recognize that the temporary migrant workers are hard workers. John's theory that the migrant workers are motivated by better work environments than in their home countries is a recognition of the sociopolitical landscape of other countries compared to Canada, but according to managers, many of these workers were well-educated in their home countries, and I am not sure that the work environment in their previous occupations would be that much worse than that found in a seafood processing plant. There are obviously reasons why these often highly educated workers come to Canada to work in the seafood processing industry. One is the higher wages workers make in comparison to their home countries, and another is the possibility of becoming permanent residents in Canada.

The recognition by Canadian workers that the workers coming in through the

TFWP were hard-working people did not mean there was no tension within the workforce. Hochschild (1983) argued that the introduction of new workers may affect the existing social relations of a workplace, changing the atmosphere and sometimes emotions of the workers. The one issue workers I spoke with raised was the preferential treatment they felt that workers from overseas were given in the plants. This included receiving more shifts and overtime hours, receiving economic support for travel costs, and receiving help with buying new vehicles. This contributed to a segmenting of the labour force, and created suspicion on the part of some workers that there was government aid, or an agreement between the government and the companies, that allowed them to bring in workers for less money.

*Jane: Yeah, the company now. You go up there now, and you can't do it [work task, or shift], see ya. And a lot of the reason for that is that they got all these foreign workers coming in. And they work, I call them ants. I literally call them ants. They will work twenty-four/seven if allowed. And they are good workers, I give them credit. They are good workers, but it's taken the jobs away from the locals, and any Canadian actually now, because they have Vietnamese coming in now, and from last year to this year it's, like, tripled. It's tripled. This year, everywhere you look, Vietnamese. There is something, there is something between the governments, why they are bringing in all those workers? Because they can get workers. They had seventy-four Newfoundlanders, and what do they do? They treat them like hell and didn't want them back. And you could tell, this year alone, the Vietnamese were getting treated good. And anybody else? The Newfoundlanders to the locals? No.*

*Ralph: And people kicked up about it, and they still got work.*

*Jane: They still got work!*

*Ralph: The senior crowd they were calling and telling not to come this year, and the seasonal workers kick up because they say there's no work, but these ones, they get in.*

*Jane: They get in! There was a lot of animosity like that this year too.*

*Ralph: They still got in, that didn't bother*

*Jane: They still got in. If I was getting thirty hours a week, they were getting sixty.*

*Ralph: Well, they were getting eighty.*

*Interviewer: So they were there all the time.*

*Jane: All the time*

**Ralph:** *And the company was kicking up a little too much overtime, so they took it away from them guys.*

**Jane:** *But then they got back in.*

**Ralph:** *But then they got back in, I was working for four or five hours and then they send me home.*

**Jane:** *And the same week they sent you home they kept the Vietnamese in for eighty.*

**Interviewer:** *Really? I wonder how they are doing that?*

**Jane:** *Well, I am thinking there is got to be a sixty/forty wage, there is got to be something going on, the Vietnamese government is paying so much of their wages, there has got to be something there, they take an inexperienced Vietnamese over a seven-year, say, Newfoundlander that know the job. Right? There is something there.*

**Nicole:** *Um, I don't know, well, when you're taking jobs from our kind of people and replacing them with other people, like foreigners, I didn't really like that. You know, when we're losing work because of them, and they're not. I didn't think they were very nice, some of them. And then they told us they were taking thirty more of us and moving us from portions to fillets and you know I think that us, living right next door to [company name,] should have first pick.*

**Paulina:** *Negative, it's pretty constant with the negativity. One of the [workers] came in here last night and said the shift needs to be over, everybody is getting at each other's throat. They are fighting constantly, nit-picking, and it's like a hostile work environment, I have been hearing that for the past few weeks.*

It is understandable that workers in the plants, who feel anxious about losing their jobs, feel threatened by a migrant workforce that is seemingly getting all the hours. Whether that is really happening or not, this does increase tension in the workforce based on race (and in this case, citizenship), with workers using the terms “foreigners,” “Canadians,” “ants,” “them,” and “us” to speak of the tensions and negativity in the plants. This suggests elements of divisiveness behind the acknowledgment that they are good workers too. People recognize them as hard workers, but do not seem to see how their specific location as full-time but temporary migrant workers allows their lives in Canada to align more fully with the company’s production schedule (and even across companies, such as

Viviane working in both the net-mending and the seafood processing plants). Workers who have family and life commitments outside of work, on a seasonal or year-‘round basis, are more likely to experience friction within the new production regime that wants them to work all the time, over time, without complaining about it.

I could not find a provincial or federal government subsidy for migrant workers using the TFWP, aside from the significant amount of money provided to these companies to support their growth, increased mechanization, and overall employment increases (or in the case of the capture plant, to maintain their employment numbers). Another incentive for employers to bring in workers may have been the “Flexibility on Prevailing Wage” amendment that was passed in April 2012, and allowed employers to pay migrant workers in the low-skill program five percent below the prevailing wage, as long as they were paying this amount to their Canadian employees as well. This amendment was reversed a year later, but while in place it may have also increased the incentive to reduce the overall wages paid to all employees. Thus, the forced pay cut that all workers were subject to at Multinational Fish Farm and NB Cannery may have been influenced by the company’s opportunity also to pay five percent less to a growing migrant workforce that was, by all accounts, increasing productivity at the same time. The wage cut also helped push out workers who did not want to accept the lower wage, allowing companies to complain of a labour shortage, and bring in more workers through the TFWP at this reduced wage.

Shannon Phillips of the Alberta Federation of Labour submitted an access to information and privacy request regarding the occupations in Canada that used this pay

discrepancy to bring in workers for less than the prevailing wage. She discovered seafood processing companies in NB, PEI, and Nova Scotia all brought in workers using this pay discrepancy (Alberta Federation of Labour 2013). This is thus another example of how federal government policies are aiding corporations over workers.

### **8.5 Vulnerability of Workers coming in through the TFWP in NB**

Both mobility and immobility play a role in the way in which workers in seafood processing are able to exercise power in the workplace or their labour agency. Recent government policies have played a role in controlling the mobility of seafood processing workers, such as through the TFWP and the changes to EI. Members of the NB workforce, while not unionized, were previously able to exert a certain amount of control over their work environments by simply walking out of the plant if they did not like working conditions and usually getting hired in another plant close by:

*Jacob: But they just, you know back then, people didn't like it in one plant, they would just go to another plant, there was, retention was more of an issue in that sense back then, but now it is more of an issue that there is just not as many people around, a lot of people going out west because there is big-paying jobs out there and so on.*

Similarly, Preibisch (2007) argues that Canadian workers have traditionally protested work durations and rhythms they found unacceptable by “voting with their feet” (11). Seasonal seafood processing workers are now less able to use this as a tool for asserting their labour rights or showing dissatisfaction with the rules of the workplace due to the effects of changes to EI that force workers to take low-paid employment and be more mobile. This is coupled with HR managers' ability to punish workers by not hiring them if they have “bad work histories,” or by outright preventing them from leaving the plant

via the constraints of the TFWP. The TFWP is recreating a situation in which highly mobile workers, travelling long distances to work, are then made immobilized at the workplace, tied to one employer, and have to accept their workplace situation or face deportation. This is the context for the current overhaul of the TFWP, outlined below (shorter work terms, less opportunity for permanent migration, and caps on the total number of workers), which further exacerbates the precariousness of these workers.

The abuses that have been reported in relation to companies using the TFWP in Canada include lack of adequate housing for workers, reduced pay for hours worked, and a lower wage than was specified at the time of hire. It has also been argued that temporary migrants entering Canada through the NOC C and D programs are more vulnerable than resident workers (Hennebry 2011). Interviewees with whom I spoke in Oceanside, NB and in NL did not report any abuses, confirmed or rumored. However, there were still areas identified during the course of my fieldwork in which these workers were clearly vulnerable to harm or exploitation. These included 1) a lack of work experience coupled with very dangerous job tasks and very weak English language skills – a recipe for an OHS disaster; 2) the lack of a third neutral body to which workers could report abuse or grievances; 3) the nature of their work schedules and incentives to pick up extra shifts, even on their days off, meaning that access to skill-building, language skills, and daycare were severely limited; and 4) lack of citizenship rights, especially the right to vote.

Workers brought in through the TFWP were in most cases put into jobs in the fish plant that were considered the hardest or most undesirable by the workers. Described as

the 3 Ds – dirty, dangerous, and difficult – these are jobs that local workers avoid and migrant workers are hired to fill (Hennebry and Preibisch 2010). In the NB fish plants I visited, workers were entering these jobs without any prior knowledge or even expectation that this was the work they had agreed to do when they came here:

***Interviewer:** So they are okay with working in the fish plants, though? Okay, so they understand that is the work that they are going to do when they come here?*

***Ryan:** They don't necessarily understand the full capacity of what they are going to be doing here, but they know that they are going to be working with fish. They don't understand that they are going to be working on the line.*

***Susan:** It depends what department you're in. The company on the whole, it's more us, but in the packing room, half of them – or maybe even sixty percent of them – [are] with the scissors, because that is where it's the hardest. They put them in the hardest jobs there is.*

***Interviewer:** Okay, and, uh, do you know if these workers have worked in other processing plants, do they have experience when they come in? Or are they coming in with no experience?*

***Belinda:** Uh, since I have been here, most of them don't have experience. Some . . . probably have got some experience but, for the most part, any experienced people are already working, any new recruits are fairly new to the industry.*

***Interviewer:** How do you do the training?*

***Andrew:** We always put them with somebody that is familiar with that part. That is the other stipulation is that they speak good English because we are scared on the safety aspect. We want to make sure that when you tell them don't put your hand there that they won't, because they do have a nasty habit of saying "Do you understand?" and they'll say yes whether they understand or not. Why, I can't figure it out, whether they are embarrassed to say that they don't understand or just don't want to get into it.*

As previously noted, the scissor packers are among the highest-paid workers in the plant, but it takes years to develop the skill to be fast and not cut oneself. These jobs have also been mechanized twice, once with the S.A.P. machines, and again in 2012, with the introduction of the Hermasa machine, which converts this work to an hourly waged job.

Andrew's plant has dealt with the language issue by having signs as well as

training manuals translated into multiple languages. As well, workers in the plant often have the benefit of working with a good number of other people from their home countries, and they can talk among themselves if they do not understand something. Even so, this leaves workers in a very high-risk situation that has been found in other industries employing workers through the TFWP (Fudge and MacPhail 2011; Fudge 2011). The TFWP helps maintain these jobs as cheap, underpaid, and unsafe. This is due to the simple fact that if these workers refused these positions, employers would have to implement changes to improve them, but with the TFWP, workers are brought in for these specific jobs, which allows wages and working conditions to remain not only unsafe, but also subpar or precarious (Hennebry 2010; Gravel et al. 2009; Sikka et al. 2011). The fact that so many of these workers apply for permanent residency through their employers can also be a significant risk: whether overtly or not, workers feel that their employers may take this away (Sikka et al. 2011). Gaining permanent residence also carries the added burden of trying to then sponsor family members, which may also lead to workers staying in jobs that are precarious and possibly dangerous (Preibisch and Otero 2014).

This situation is further exacerbated by the lack of a neutral reporting organization to which workers can go if they feel they are being placed in unsafe working condition or are having their rights abused. The interviewee at the Multicultural Centre explained that these workers feel insecure, and that there is no one to whom they are able to report issues or complaints, aside from people within their own company, which holds the power to deport them.

*X: When we speak about the newcomers, they are still in that mode, that they are not at the level that they are comfortable, they don't have anybody up there, they don't have an ambassador to tell them, or they don't have leaders, you know, within their community.*

*Interviewer: So what happens if a worker has a problem at the plant, who would they talk to?*

*X: They would talk to somebody in HR.*

*Interviewer: So there is nobody in there, sort of a representative from their country that they can go to?*

*X: No, as far as I know, there is a process. So they work normally for a supervisor or a manager in the plant, and they will speak to them and then it will go to the HR department if it is an HR issue, if it's a different issue it will go to a different department.*

While companies do have structures in place to deal with complaints, these can be complicated to navigate, and have the potential to backfire even for workers who have worked at the company for years, speak English fluently, and know their rights as Canadian citizens. How would workers brought in under the TFWP navigate their OHS rights? The combination of lack of expectation, experience, and language proficiency, as well as uneven power dynamics enabled by a program that has placed a great deal of economic power on the shoulders of one company, creates a scenario in which workers are vulnerable to injury and abuse. It is thus not hard to understand why workers seem agreeable all the time, even when they do not understand something.

Workers here under the TFWP work as many hours as they can. As Viviane explained, they are here to work, and are looking to work as much as possible. Yet this work schedule makes it very difficult for workers to access any social programs. For example, the Multicultural Centre in the area of my research offered language classes, but found that they had a hard time filling them because of the overlap between the hours migrant workers coming in through the TFWP worked in the plant and the hours when

the centre was open:

*X: However, one of the issues that we are facing is that they work on shift work, and we work on not shift work, so it becomes an issue to deal with, like sometimes, our English classes were empty because everyone is working, and sometimes you would come and see ten people in an English class. So that is one of the issues that we are facing here at the association. The numbers are there, but they are not consistent. And we have tried to work around their schedule, but we have not been successful because their schedules are changing so often, like sometimes on a weekly basis, and we can't just keep up with their schedule.*

This speaks to inefficiencies in Canada's (in this case New Brunswick's) attempts to provide social support, as the programs that are available are run by people who are able to work a more standard nine-to-five, Monday-to-Friday work schedule, which no longer matches the schedules migrant workers in seafood processing are required to work.

Attempts to hold these programs during non-standard work hours were further thwarted by the extreme fluidity (flexibility) of the work shifts. The significance of this variability for any worker trying to maintain a semblance of work/life balance should not be missed.

Another issue with scheduling is related to daycare, which has always been an issue in a seafood processing industry historically dominated by women who have relied on informal family and community childcare arrangements during the fishing season. The loss of seasonal work not only makes childcare a year-round issue, it also requires a support system that is able to take on children for the variable shifts, often lasting twelve hours or longer, that many of these workers are now expected to work year-round. Paul, a daycare worker explains:

*Interviewer: So do you think that your business is positively or negatively impacted by the aquaculture or wild fish processing business?*

*Paul: It's a little bit of both, it really is a little bit of both. Um, 'cause it has definitely given my business a boost over the years, but I have also had to try to accommodate weird things . . . and I also really can't accommodate [name of*

town], because they have a processing plant, but they are open until seven at night. People have to make different arrangements because it's a really long day, and trying to find someone to pick up your kids at five o'clock just isn't feasible.

**Interviewer:** So you have noticed a change here since the plant here switched its schedule. 'Cause there is, like [Multinational Fish Farm] has a, part of their plant here, so do you have any of those families?

**Paul:** I only have employees from [Multinational Fish Farm] that work in the office, and I have quite a few of those, but I don't have anyone from the processing plants.

As Paul states, due to the nature of the shifts and hours under which seafood processing plants operate, formalized daycare institutions are usually not able to accommodate many workers' children, unless they are office staff who generally work a more standard schedule.

This is an issue for all workers, but especially for workers who have come into the industry through the TFWP, and have gained residency in Canada; this allows their children to migrate with them, but they still lack a larger family support network to aid in childcare. An example of how this can be an issue for this workforce is provided in the following quoted passage, which recounts the story of how a woman actually had her daughter removed by Family Services for leaving her unsupervised for too long:

**Mary:** I had one lady, when I first moved down here I was going to do some babysitting. And she called me, she was a foreign lady and she was talking and her daughter was taken away from her. She had to work long hours and she wasn't able to be home. Her little girl was nine years old. In Romania, she was allowed to leave her. But not in Canada. And she [the woman] had a fourteen-year-old brother that was mean to her, or whatever, I don't know the story, all I know is that she told me that her fourteen-year-old brother wasn't taking care of her [daughter], or that didn't count as adult supervision, which surprised me, because at fourteen you would think that would count, but whether that was the relationship between the brother and sister I don't know, anyway she had her little girl taken away from her, and she was looking for someone to take care of her child from seven to seven and at the time I was home with her [points to own daughter], she was an infant, and I said my husband wasn't home until I think it was eight o'clock, and he was working . . . and I said he wouldn't be home until about eight, eight-thirty, and she said, well bring her [the child] home afterwards, so this means that these people

*come over here, they don't have vehicles, they don't have childcare, and they are really, they're trying to do the best that they can with what they have.*

The lack of a support system for some of the migrant workers (whose extended families may have migrated to NB as well, but who also work in the plants) makes them vulnerable, and they may have a harder time accessing services that are meant to help. Cultural differences may also pose a problem, as Mary described above, as what is allowed in one country may not be in Canada.

The workers coming in through the TFWP in NB are more susceptible to abuse and harm, and have a harder time accessing the social support that may exist, due to the nature of the program. This is really indicative of a government that allows a two-tiered immigration system, in which not all workers are treated equally, and some are not just segregated, but temporary. Grosfoguel et al. (2014) describe this as the human/non-human line that exists in racist migration policies such as the TFWP. Even those workers who are able to gain permanent residency still face significant barriers to a level playing field with Canadian citizens. One of the biggest differences is the ability of these people to hold political sway within the community, province, and nation in which they are residing.

***Kim:** The only difference between a citizen and a residence is that I cannot vote. I can collect my pension, all the benefits that you guys would get from the government, I get it too. The only thing I cannot do is run for office and vote. I don't do that anyway. But it took me a long time to be a citizen; it took me, what, over ten years to get my citizenship*

The ramifications of a workforce made up of migrant workers, who, even if they do gain permanent residency status, remain politically disenfranchised, are serious. In fact, only citizens of Canada can vote in NB in provincial, as well as in municipal, district

education council, and regional health authority elections ([www.electionsnb.ca](http://www.electionsnb.ca)). If they are hired, and start to go through the process of gaining residency, it will take nine years before they will be able to carry any political clout within their community, their province, and their nation. What are the ramifications politically when large numbers of workers and community members are not only politically disenfranchised, but are also economically as well as emotionally (through the bringing in of extended family) tied to one employer? These are similar political and economic power dynamics to the earlier company -town model. At a minimum, it leaves workers with significantly less power not just in their workplaces, but also in their communities.

## **8.6 Migrant Labour in the Community**

Migrant workers are not only coming into a work environment, they are also coming into a community, and they have had an impact in a number of ways. Talking to community members, I learned that these workers were welcomed into their community, and thought of as a positive force in terms of population, increased multiculturalism, and increased economic support for local businesses:

***Jim:** You know, where there is, where you've seen a lot of the foreign workers come in the community, and if nothing else they have put more money in the community, because they do spend. And then eventually more of their family members do come over.*

***John:** And a lot of them have learned to speak English, you know, they add to the community. I find that we do a multicultural day, and they do a little thing in the park, and a lot of them bring their traditional dishes that they make, it's a good time.*

***Belinda:** Yep, the most of them, a lot of them have bought homes, so they live in the area, their kids go to school here so, their kids hang out with the other kids, so everyone intermingles.*

**Ryan:** *The second thing you see is the property value of houses has been steady; it has not dropped as [has] the rest of the market. There is not much housing available in the [name of region].*

**Interviewer:** *But you see a lot of houses for sale*

**Ryan:** *But it's all old property, not property that people would want to live in, you can just go to MLS and find out, look at the average-price house in the [name of region], all of them are two hundred, three hundred thousand, between the last, I think two to three years you see that the price drop is not [as] significant as it is in the [name of closest urban area], or even in [name of larger region], like [community close by] has dropped drastically, but [name of town] has stayed steady. That is another thing that we are noticing.*

**Interviewer:** *Do you know why that would be?*

**Ryan:** *Because the newcomers working in the fish plants, if they are raising enough capital, they are buying property. I know of four families purchased houses this last year, which is quite a big amount for the newcomer population.*

**Sandra:** *And with [Multinational Fish Farm] now, look, you see the people that have come from away, that have come here, that are driving big cars, I mean, you know, they are making their living, they have bought houses here, they are raising their families here, they are in the gymnastics, they are in all the sports.*

As the passages above exemplify, for the most part, those who lived and worked in the area were welcoming to the foreign workers. They were happy to see people moving into their community, as they saw these workers as stemming population decline. Community members also seemed to enjoy the multicultural feel of their previously homogenous communities, which filters into sites such as grocery stores and community events, providing new variety.

A multicultural centre was established in Oceanside to aid these new workers in their transition to Canada. It provides English training for those workers who came in before the 2013 official language requirement was instituted in the TFWP. It also helps migrant workers apply for citizenship, find housing, or set up a bank account, as well as addressing other settlement needs for newcomers, as described by an employee of the

association:

*We have ESL, English as a second language, and we also have LNC classes, which is language for newcomers to Canada, we also have people who have applied for the citizenship, or who are eligible to apply for the citizenship, [they] can take citizenship training course, so this would make their transition into the exam much more easier. And then we do provide settlement service, if anyone is looking for housing, needs information on anything related to being successful in the county, for example if someone is looking for a house, someone wants to open a bank account, someone wants to get a mortgage, someone is in trouble with the law, someone wants to do their taxes, or they want to speak with a government agency.*

Overall, between employers and the services provided by the multicultural organization in the area, there are many services offered to the workers coming in from overseas to help them integrate into the community, if they are able to fit them around their work schedules.

For the migrant workers, the transition into a new community can be difficult, and for some, their expectations and the reality of life and work in Canada have not always aligned:

*X: The negative things that I heard [from foreign workers] was that Canada was different, or that their perception of Canada was . . . quite different from what it is. They were more thinking of larger cities, things like that. So this is something, and sometimes they are frustrated that they have the education from back home, and they want to get accredited so they can move on with their lives. From the employer side we really haven't heard anything in terms of negativity.*

**Interviewer:** *So the workers generally seem happy? So the ones that aren't happy go back?*

*X: There have been a few cases, they either move back because of personal reasons, or reasons of unhappiness, or even times we have heard that they have broken the law here, and they have been forced to go back. But generally speaking, from a company perspective, they generally don't say anything bad, it's just that they feel that they were not given the right information at the beginning of the hiring practice. Or they perceived differently and they don't ask the right questions.*

Some migrant workers were expecting the work or the community to be different than it

was, especially when they are well educated, and used to large cities. This has been enough of an issue for some that they did not stay, but I did not get the impression that this occurred very often in Oceanside, NB. Also mentioned is the fact that some of these workers have broken the law. This was mentioned in many interviews, but was isolated to one incident between two workers, and did not seem to be an ongoing or common problem.

The influx of these workers has had a positive impact economically on the community overall in terms of maintaining the value of houses, and contributing to the local economy through shopping in local stores. One negative impact on both migrant workers from other provinces (as discussed in the previous chapter), and local people in the community who do not own their own homes, is the increase in rental rates since migrant workers arrived:

***Ryan:** And the other thing I should also mention is because of the workforce here, having a larger workforce from away, this has really raised many issues in [name of community]. So, for example, the rents have gone really high, compared to where they were in 2006, they have almost gone up fifty percent in the last five years.*

***Sandra:** Oh, well it's very hard for anybody to get a rent[al unit]. Because all the houses, the houses are all full.*

High rents are a significant barrier for workers who rent accommodation, as the higher rates are, the less profit they are taking home. This would, of course, be the case for any worker who is not a permanent resident and/or does not own a home.

The reaction from the local community to the workers brought in through the Temporary Foreign Workers Program was, overall, quite positive. This had a lot to do with the permanent nature of these mobile workers, because so many of them were

applying to be, and getting accepted as, permanent residents. This enabled them eventually to bring their families, buy houses, get their driver's licenses, buy cars, and also shop in the area and participate in local social organizations and community events. The province of NB played a significant role in the large number of these workers becoming residents, due to their policies aimed at boosting the province's population. I now draw on the larger academic literature on the TFWP, mobility, and citizenship to situate my data findings within the larger discussion on work and mobility.

### **8.7 The TFWP in Seafood Processing Plants in NB versus Other Industries in NB**

Despite the fact that NB had an unemployment rate of 9.5 percent in 2011 (New Brunswick 2013), to an increasing degree purported labour shortages in seafood processing plants in Oceanside leading up to 2012 were addressed through the use of the TFWP. Seafood processing employers in NB can bring migrant workers in under two low-skill occupation classifications, Fish and Seafood Plant Workers or Labourers in Fish and Seafood Processing, both of which fall under sections C and D of the National Occupations Code (NOC). According to the government of New Brunswick's occupational profiles, the employment requirements for the occupation Fish Plant Workers (9463) specify that, "some secondary school education may be required, and on-the-job training is required." This occupation fits into category C/9 of the NOC matrix. The employment requirements for the occupation Labourers in Fish and Seafood Processing (9618) specify that "some secondary school education may be required," and it falls under category D/9 of the NOC matrix (New Brunswick 2013).

**Table 8.1 TFW Fish Plant Workers in NB, 2008–2012**

Number of TFW Fish Plant Workers in New Brunswick		
2008-2012		
Year	# of TFWs	Ranking
2008	60	7
2009	80	4
2010	420	1
2011	715	1
2012	840	1

ESDC 2014

Thus Fish Plant Worker seems to be a slightly higher-skill occupation, and the majority of seafood processing workers coming into NB have been brought in to work in this role (see table 8.1).

Data on the TFWP comes from the federal department of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), formally Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). The department lists the top occupational groups according to the number of temporary foreign worker positions on Positive Labour Market Opinions (including the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program) between 2008 and 2012 in NB. As indicated in Table 8.2, this listing shows that the occupation Fish Plant Workers (FPW) ranked seventh relative to others in 2008, fourth in 2009, and first in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

**Table 8.2 TFW Labourers in Fish Processing in NB, 2008–2012**

Number of TFW Labourers in Fish Processing in New Brunswick 2008–2012		
Year	# Of TFW	Ranking
2008	105	3
2009	120	3
2010	195	3
2011	360	2
2012	280	3

ESDC 2014

As indicated in Table 8.2, The occupation Labourers in Fish and Seafood Processing (LFP) rated third from 2008 to 2010, moved up to second place in 2011, and then fell back to third place in 2012 (ESDC 2014). ESDC provides data by top occupational groups starting in 2005, and neither of the two seafood processing occupations fell below the top ten for the number of TFW until 2008. In fact, only five workers were brought in to work in seafood processing industries in 2005 in Atlantic Canada (APEC 2014). Since 2010, companies processing seafood in NB have brought in the most migrant workers to NB through the TFWP, well above all other occupations at forty-eight percent of the total in 2012, especially when the occupations Fish Plant Workers and Labourers in Fish Processing are combined (see table 8.3). The seafood processing plants in 2012 were estimated to be bringing in 350 workers through the TFWP – so, one-third of the workers brought in through TFWP in NB.

**Table 8.3 Total TFWs in Seafood Processing in NB, 2008–2012**

Total Number of TFW in Seafood Processing in New Brunswick 2008-2012			Total Number of TFW in New Brunswick 2008-2012
Year	# of TFW	% of NB	# of TFW
2008	165	9	1775
2009	200	13	1520
2010	637	36	1780
2011	1075	43	2495
2012	1120	48	2345

HRDC 2014

Due to the significant portion of the workforce composed of migrant labour in at least one of the seafood processing plants in Oceanside, this plant would be an example of what then-federal Employment Minister Jason Kenny described as a company that has “built their labour model on the program” (Canada 2014, 9).

## **8.8 Discussion**

Interviews with managers showed that employers chose specific workers from specific geographical areas based on gendered and racialized stereotypes. Preibisch (2010) and Preibisch and Binford (2007) found employers used stereotypes to target specific individuals from specific countries to work in agriculture in Canada. These employers associate individual abilities, personality, and learning capabilities with specific ethnicities (Lendaro and Imdorf 2012) in order to identify whom they want to work in which jobs. These stereotypes were similar to ones I found among managers in NB.

Employers' ability to specify both the sex and nationality/ethnicity of their workforce, Preibisch (2010) argues, is in direct conflict with national and provincial human rights legislation (416).

Race and ethnicity now play a role in redefining gendered work. Traditionally a strongly gendered division of labour existed in seafood processing plants, in which women did the highly repetitive work and men did not. Racialization (via feminization) of Asian men allowed them to access traditionally female occupations in the plants in NB, and this opened up these jobs to both males and females, and especially to younger men. As work in these plants has become scarcer and less secure, men have shifted into positions historically held by women. An industry once dominated by female workers is now more evenly split between men and women (40/60), with more men hired into the "female" jobs, and fewer women now working in these plants.

It is the underlying gendered, classed, and racialized aspect of the TFWP that makes these workers more vulnerable to exploitation (Preibisch and Binford 2007; Preibisch 2010; Hennebry 2010). Much of this vulnerability is based on the "othering" that occurs when segmentation of a workforce (or society) is done via social constructions of difference that equate to inequalities in power. In the case of the seafood processing industry in Oceanside, this occurs through the wielding of different rights and powers in the workplace due to the structure of the TFWP. Nisim and Benjamin (2010) describe othering as a "negotiated order framework," which is a "trans-situational process which accounts for the connection between local actions and extra-local inequalities" (221). Therefore, mobilities of labourers, and how these workers are "othered," happens

both across and within spatial and temporal geographical contexts (Silvey 2005). Thus, within the small community of Oceanside, and the seafood processing companies based there, segmentation of the workforce is both creating and recreating gendered and racialized notions of “others,” but also working to recreate a labour force that complements, rather than creates friction with, larger global corporate capital flows.

By denying group members basic citizenship and other commonly accepted rights, workers in subordinated racialized groups can be subjected to excessively exploitative labor regimes. Higher levels of surplus can be extracted from these racialized workers, who have limited recourse for defending themselves. The racialization of labor is typically linked to forms of free and unfree labor. The denial of full citizenship and related rights to subordinate racialized groups enables employers to engage in unchecked coercive practices, typically sanctioned by the state. Through the racialization of labor, capitalists seek to maximize their profits by employing workers of color for lower wages than their white counterparts, or sometimes for no wages at all. Moreover, capitalists are able to force workers of color to live and labor under much inferior conditions. Racialized labor systems are gendered, creating complex intersection of race-class-gender divisions among workers. All women face a gendered division of labor, but women of color face especially onerous pay and poor working conditions (Bonacich et al. 2008, 342–343).

With the increase in temporary foreign workers in seafood processing, the trend towards a labour force that is marginalized, underpaid, and also without any ownership claims or wealth seems to be increasing. Bavington et al. (2004) understand gender, class, and race symmetries that leave women in the fishery marginal or invisible, and low-paid or unpaid, as being similar to the ways that Carothers and Chambers (2009) understand “how the privatization, marketization, and commodification processes in fishery systems discursively and materially remake human-marine relationships across diverse regions” (40). Within the seafood processing industry, labour relations and labour market restructuring, via narratives of labour shortages, are creating a labour force much more

removed from ownership or access to wealth accumulation within the industry.

Aquaculture and capture plant managers' discussions of labour shortages manifested differently. Labour shortages in the aquaculture plant were reported to be largely quantitative, in that they had low numbers of people applying to work in the plant. Fewer workers may have wanted to work at Multinational Fish Farm due to the transformation of its work environment, which took place much earlier than that of the capture plant, including ending its seasonal production cycle (and seasonal reserve labour pool), reducing wages, increasing shift lengths, making overtime mandatory, and allowing fewer breaks. Thus, aquaculture may have already established itself as an undesirable place to work, and workers who did want to work in the industry also had the option of full-time, stable employment at Small Fish Farm, who did not have labour shortage issues. In contrast, the two capture processing plants did not have a shortage of applicants, just a shortage of the kind of worker they were looking for, which seemed to match the rhetoric around TFWP workers as "good workers" that was common in my interviews. It seemed that when workers from overseas were brought in, they became the right people, or the "good workers." Managers at the 3 large plants often explained this as due to their work ethic. This was also echoed by Dan Kelly, the president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business; in a CBC news story, he is quoted as saying, "The strengths of some of the TFW workers, in terms of their work ethic is, it pains me to say this, but sometime it is better than that of their Canadian counterparts" (CBC News 2014, April 8).

Sharma (2006) argues that the qualitative nature of labour shortages refers not to a

shortfall in the number of workers, but in the type of worker. “What there is is a shortage of is a particular *kind* of workforce that can be filled by un-free, contract labour. In other words, in Canada, there are shortages of cheapened and politically subjugated labour power” (Sharma 2006, 109). I would also add that there is a shortage of cheapened and politically subjugated labour power that is *also* devoted, loyal, flexible, and uncomplainingly hard-working, characteristics that seem to typify migrant workers. Sharma argued in 2006 that “global relationships of racism, imperialism, and patriarchy shaped how differently categorized people were socially and legally positioned both within and outside of Canadian society and the claims they could make on the state” (75). Thus the gendered and racialized migrant workers were further segmented and subjugated by gaps in by their citizenship status, which actually worked in favour of the employers, as workers coming in through the TFWP without citizenship rights including the right to freely change employers (or human rights – see Grosfoguel et al. 2014) were working and behaving in ways that improved productivity, and changed the way that all employers were able to act, essentially lowering labour agency for all workers (although managers described the productivity boost as increasing morale).

Employers and governments often define shortages “not by the absence of actual workers ready and able to work, but by the existence of particular characteristics of the labour supply that impede the process of capital accumulation” (Sassen 1988, in Sharma 2006, 108). The processes impeding, or causing friction with, capital accumulation in the NB seafood processing context included higher wages, and social supports such as unionized environments. Therefore, claims about labour shortages are part of a larger

process of labour reorganization that in the case of the TFWP in Canada use a government-sanctioned immigration program, aided by other provincial and federal government policies, to create a labour force that is in sync with the new rhythm and interests of corporate capital accumulation in the seafood processing industry in Oceanside. Secondary-sector industries, such as the seafood processing industry, tend to cluster together and amalgamate in areas where firms can “free-ride” on the abundance of unskilled labour. Thus, methods of accessing cheaper labour via

[s]kills formed in other spheres (such as homes, schools, and other workplaces) and possessed by marginal workers (such as women, immigrants, young people, and redundant workers) are plundered by this group of secondary firms able to survive themselves only on the margins of the labor market. Such “parasitic” strategies are tenable, of course, only when the host organism is sufficiently large (Peck 1992, 340).

Therefore, when we look at the labour pool in NB, which historically consisted of a large pool of workers (consisting of exactly the marginal workers identified in the above passage), we see that companies in this community, through merging and acquisition processes geared toward continual accumulation of capital and competition, in effect reduced their access to a large pool of marginal workers through decreasing job opportunities, then further reduced it by decreasing the local labour pool via lowered work quality and employment-related mobility (Massey 1994; Peck 1992). Thus, layoffs and degraded work environments and working conditions aided in the manufacturing of a labour shortage, allowing companies to have their applications for international migrant labourers approved by government. Peck states, “The labor process and labor market are much more than cost structures; they are arenas of political power and conflicting class, gender, and ethnic forces. Firms’ labor adjustment strategies are not calculated on the

back of the proverbial envelope; they are formulated within the confines of ongoing imperatives of labor control” (1992, 342). Current seafood processing companies in Oceanside have much more control over their entire labour force with the advent of the TFWP.

From the mid-1980s to today, there has been “global capitalist restructuring and aggressive employer attacks on workers” (Kealey and House 2009, 29). A large and growing body of literature demonstrates the increasing precariousness of labour in Canada, as well as globally (see Bernstein 2006; Fudge and Owens 2006; Quinlan et al. 2001; Scott-Marshall and Tompa 2011; Tompa et al. 2007; Vosko 2006a; Vosko 2006b; Vosko et al. 2009; Vosko 2010). There is also a growing body of literature that links the use of international and interprovincial migrant workers to precarious employment (Dyer et al. 2011; Fudge 2011; Fudge and MacPhail 2011; McDowell et al. 2009). Recent scholarship on the low-skilled TFWP has shown that the introduction of workers brought in through this program has increased precariousness for all workers via overall decreases in pay and increased flexibility (Anderson 2010; Bauder 2006; Fudge 2011; Sharma 2006). This is connected to the high percentage of migrant workers clustered in inflexible and precarious work (Anderson 2010), increasing, or creating, precarious employment norms (Fudge 2011). Precariousness of work creates higher occupational health and safety risks that have been shown to be further heightened when migrant workers are placed in these occupations, due to their non-citizen status, inexperience in the workplace for which they are recruited, and language barriers (Sikka et al. 2011; Underhill and Rimmer 2014; Premji et al. 2014). Risks can also be heightened for specific groups of

workers if employers are hiring them based on racial or ethnic stereotypes resulting in racial/ethnic clusters of workers exposed to the same OHS risks (Premji et al. 2014). The trend in labour models away from non-standard employment is also a trend away from the male public/female private-sphere model towards an adult-worker model, in which work becomes the defining element of a person; migration policy seems to be adding to this transformation (Dyer et al. 2011). This trend is realigning the seafood processing labour force in NB with the new rhythm of capital accumulation as it is reconfigured under neoliberal, multinational, corporate production and profit schemes. It is also increasing precarity and vulnerability for workers.

Since 2012, increased media coverage and employee outrage at being replaced by a migrant workforce (such as happened within the Royal Bank of Canada and McDonalds – see, for example, CBC News 2012; CBC News 2014b) combined with a high number of reported incidents of abuse and maltreatment brought forward by overseas workers themselves (CBC 2011; CBC News 2014d; CBC News 2014j; CBC 2014), to result in an overhaul of the TFWP in 2014.

### **8.9 Changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program**

The 2014 changes to the TFWP, outlined in a government of Canada working paper titled *Overhauling the Temporary Foreign Worker Program: Putting Canadians First*, were actually preceded by changes put in place in April and July of 2013. The changes announced in April 2013 included 1) the termination of the Flexibility on Prevailing Wage, which allowed employers to pay skilled workers brought in through the TFWP fifteen percent less than the prevailing wage in their occupation, and unskilled workers

five percent less (Canada 2014); and 2) the limiting of language requirements listed in job applications to English and French. The language limitation was in response to the case of HD Mining Ltd., which sought workers who could speak Mandarin for its mine near Tumbler Ridge, BC, requiring the TFWP to fill these positions (CBC News 2012b). Additional changes were announced in July 2013. There was a new requirement to post a job vacancy notice for a period of two to four weeks, and to post it in an increased number of outlets. Previously, employers were required simply to post on a provincial job bank, plus one other method. Employers were now required to make additional postings, plus show a demonstrated effort to hire Canadians from underrepresented groups, including Aboriginal people, Canadians with disabilities, and new immigrants. As well, two additional questions were included in the LMIA (formerly LMO) to prevent the outsourcing of Canadian jobs; this was in direct response to a case in which the Royal Bank of Canada hired workers through the TFWP, and then had their Canadian employees (who were being replaced by the TFWs) train them (see *Huffington Post Canada* 2013). Finally, employers would now be charged \$275 per worker brought in under the program.

These changes did little to curb the influx of workers coming into Canada through this program, or the criticism of it in the media. Story after story of problems, abuses, and impacts on Canadians flooded newspapers and talk-radio shows. The news stories included a CBC News story in May 2014 reporting the rapid rise in the number of workers coming into the Atlantic provinces through the TFWP, citing an increase from 3,500 in 2005 to 10,900 in 2012 (APEC 2014). This story also noted that twenty-three

percent of these workers were entering low-skill positions. Due to the number of reported cases of abuse, a moratorium was put on the program for the food-service sector on April 24, 2014 (APEC 2014).

In June of 2014, the working paper *Overhauling the Temporary Foreign Worker Program: Putting Canadians First* was released, revealing significant changes to the program. The first change was the overhauling of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program by splitting it into two programs: the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the International Mobility Program (IMP). The division essentially shifts all skilled labourers, as well as labourers who fall under a bilateral agreement (i.e. NAFTA), into the IMP. This program does not require specific employer demand, or an LMIA, and workers are provided with an open permit that also allows for eventual permanent residency. This program is targeting workers mainly from “highly developed” countries. The reworked TFWP focuses mainly on low-skill occupations, and workers are tied directly to the employer who brings them in through an LMIA. The target countries of origin for these workers are “developing” countries.

Numerous changes were made to the TFWP, aside from separating it from the IMP. The changes included an increase in the LMIA fee from \$275 to \$1,000 per worker, charged each time an employer applies for the LMIA. The increase in fee is justified due to the increase in rigor in the application process. Employers must now provide information on the total number of Canadians who applied for their jobs, and the number of Canadians interviewed. They also must provide justification for why these Canadians were not hired. Employers also must agree that they will not lay off, or reduce the wages

of, Canadian workers if workers brought in through the TFWP are also employed.

Workers are also no longer divided into low- and high-skill categories; instead, they are divided by low- and high-wage categories. These more or less mirror the previous low-skill/high-skill categories, but the change reflects efforts to gauge labour needs better in given areas. The wages are based on median provincial wages; thus, low-wage jobs are jobs in which the prevailing wage is lower than the provincial median. For NB, this would be any job that pays less than \$17.79/hour (Canada 2014, 7). Thus the \$11–\$12 an hour seafood processing workers were making in Oceanside in 2012 would qualify for the low-pay stream.

Employers bringing workers into low-wage positions would face a limit on how many workers they can bring in, and for how long. Due to issues with companies restructuring their workforces based on the workers brought in through the TFWP (as was the case with at least one of the NB plants), workplaces were limited to only ten percent of their workforce composed of workers brought in through the TFWP. Employers were required to gradually reduce their TFW workforce percentages. Any workplaces that have over thirty percent of their workforce made up of these workers would not be able to bring in any new workers. Those companies hoping to bring in new workers were subjected to a cap of thirty percent of their workforce in 2014, twenty percent by July 1, 2015, and by July 16, 2016, ten percent. Workers would only be granted a work permit for one year, and employers must reapply every year (and pay the \$1,000 fee/LMIA). This is to “ensure foreign workers are coming in on a truly temporary basis, and that the program is used as a last and limited resort.” Workers currently on a

work permit were able to stay until their contracts run out (Canada 2014).

There were also limitations on bringing in workers through the TFWP in areas of high unemployment. However, in order for an employer to have an application rejected, they would have to be doing *all* of the following:

- applying for an LMIA in a Statistics Canada economic region with an annual unemployment rate over six percent;
- seeking an LMIA in a specific occupation identified under the North American Industry Classification System as Accommodations & Food Services or Retail Sales (NAIC 72, 44, 45); and
- seeking an LMIA in an occupation in one of the selected National Occupational Classification Codes skill level D occupations.

These restrictions are really aimed at food-industry occupations in areas of high unemployment, and would not limit employers in NB seafood processing (as they meet only two of the three conditions, high unemployment and low-skill work). Other changes include: increased data collection on labour markets by the federal government, to link job shortages more efficiently with workers seeking work; increased inspections of workplaces (one in four employers per year); and increased ramifications for those companies that abuse the program, of whom then-federal Employment Minister Jason Kenny said, “We will better prevent and detect abuse and penalize employers who abuse the program. We will severely sanction those who break the rules. We'll better protect foreign workers and we'll recognize that Canada benefits from international mobility” (CBC News 2014f). Exempt from the changes to the low-wage program were workers

brought in under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), as well as the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP).

The changes were extensive, and had an immediate effect on the number of applications made for workers under the TFWP, with a reported seventy-four percent reduction in applications after the working paper was released (CBC News 2014K). Yet abuses were still being reported, as reflected in an investigation into Alliance Energy for allegedly laying off dozens of Canadian workers while maintaining their workforce brought in under the TFWP (CBC News 2014h), and allegations by tradesmen working at the Husky Sunrise Plant in the Alberta oil sands that the high number of workers brought in under the TFWP to work in the oil sands are both untrained and unable to communicate in English, which is posing safety risks to all workers (CBC News 2014i). There were also claims that employers were circumventing the newly imposed changes by using a program called the Intra-Company Transfer program (ICT), which is not subject to any conditions, fees, or watch-keeping, and although originally created to allow companies to transfer top-level employees to different countries with less paperwork, it seemed to be used to move migrant workers horizontally or vertically across companies, without proper education or training for these jobs (Walkom 2014). The example of Viviane working in both the net-mending and seafood processing plants may be an example of this, and this serves as another way in which increased corporate capitalist models are further able to exploit and cheapen workers' employment.

As reported in the introduction of this thesis, the response from Atlantic Canada's fish processing industry to the TFWP changes was concerning. The most common

complaint was that there would not be enough workers for the plants, and the work would get shipped overseas (Morgan 2014; CBC News July 2, 2014; Wright 2014). While the seafood processing industry claimed that local workers were not working in the plants, preferring instead to work in Alberta, then-federal Employment Minister Jason Kenny responded that the labour shortage was a market problem, not a labour one, and recommended raising wages, increasing benefits, and providing more flexible shifts and working hours, as well as increased mechanization, as possible solutions (Wright 2014b).

These market solutions that Kenny proposed had supposedly been taken up by the seafood processing industry, including the eventual raising of wages by forty to fifty percent, although plant representatives argued that it could not be done right away or the plants would go bankrupt (CBC News 2014l). Immediate responses included attempting to hire workers in the area, as well as students, Aboriginal people, and workers from neighbouring communities who could be bused in, but the industry had also replaced workers with machines (CBC News 2014e). There was also still ongoing pressure on the federal government to amend changes to the program to allow companies in Atlantic Canada seafood processing to bring in workers, and Kenny had stated he would consider changes (Canadian Press 2014). Indeed, after intense lobbying efforts, the new Liberal government of Justin Trudeau exempted the Atlantic Canada seafood processing industry from the cap for 2016. In 2016, employers were permitted an unlimited number of workers for a maximum of 180 days (CBC News 2016).

The changes to the program have addressed the ambiguity around whether people brought into Canada through the program are here temporarily or not, as workers will

now only be able to come into the country on a temporary basis, but the exemption of the seafood processing industry in Atlantic Canada from the cap on the number of workers who can be brought in excuses the industry from having to improve its work quality, including wages, in order to attract workers it had previously pushed out. Despite the extensively overhauled TFWP, there is still significant concern regarding the underlying structural basis of the program. These concerns include the fact that workers are no longer able to engage in “two-step” migration via the TFWP, and the fact that a cap exists on the number of workers that companies can bring in. This makes it more difficult for firms’ to restructure their labour forces around this program, and also limits those companies hiring workers in areas of high unemployment (although there are some pretty big loopholes), and requires the reduction of the total number of foreign workers in these areas (of high unemployment) over a three-year period. These changes aim to improve the ability of the Canadian workforce to get hired, forcing corporations to increase wages and improve working conditions to attract them if needed. However, the racialized and gendered framework that enabled easy exploitation of foreign workers has not been dealt with. The program is still used to import a temporary workforce to Canada to do low-skilled, low-paid, and dangerous work without ensuring that these workers have the ability to become citizens in the country to which they are providing significant economic support.

Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi’s reaction to the changes to the TFWP was to condemn the broad-brush approach to reforms, and to state that Alberta especially is dependent on this program for workers (and for its economy), but he also criticized the

precarious status of the workers brought in under the program, stating it was un-Canadian (*Huffington Post Alberta* 2014). The splitting of the TFWP into two migration programs further entrenches the two-tiered migration process into a low-wage/low-skill circular migration program that gives workers few rights, and a permanent high-wage/high-skill program. This not only specifically discriminates against workers in lower-wage occupations (who are usually from developing countries), it also streamlines the immigration program to align with a Canadian multicultural model that favours high-skilled workers. In addition, the program's structure largely ignores the economic contribution that these low-skilled workers make to the Canadian economy. Thus, the recent changes to the TFWP that claim to improve protection of the rights of migrant workers have, at the same time, made it more difficult for these workers to become legitimate Canadian workers, and citizens, with citizen rights. The shortened work contracts for workers using the TFWP is potentially harmful because it increases pressure on these workers to make as much money as they can in the shorter amount of time they have. Fees workers may have paid to recruiters in their home countries could add to this pressure because of the reduced time they will have to pay off such debts. Restrictions on the number of people allowed into the country under the TFWP could also put further pressure on the workers who are brought in, who may feel a heightened burden due to the fact they were among the "lucky" ones, and the decreasing number of workers overall may increase the workloads of the few who remain.

There is also the concern that workers will somehow be made to cover the increased costs of bringing them in under the TFWP. With workers now left with less

chance of gaining permanent residency under the program, will it in fact increase the number of undocumented migrant workers in Canada? The link between the use of migrant workers and the unemployment rate in Canada is another area of concern. During the period when the federal Conservative government held power (2006–2015), the numbers of temporary work migrants in the country steadily increased, via various programs (including the TFWP) that have encouraged migration via work versus family, or refugee status, coinciding with a higher unemployment rate during this period, due to competition between migrant workers and Canadian residents looking for work (Mertins-Kirkwood 2014). Thus as industries pressure the Canadian Government for exemptions to the TFWP restrictions, it may have possible ramifications for unemployment rates.

The overhaul of the TFWP has put into place both inhibitors to using the program extensively, as well as better watch-keeping regulations to reduce exploitation, but these will only be effective if they are actually implemented. A concern is that the current market, together with employer-driven immigration are, in a sense, privatizing the immigration process in Canada (Boti and Guy 2012). It would seem that a better course of action would be to eliminate the two-tiered (and inherently exploitative) immigration system, and allow all workers coming to Canada to have open work permits and the opportunity to become citizens (Mertins-Kirkwood 2014).

## **8.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided an understanding of *how* the TFWP was used in one area of high unemployment, in the seafood processing industry in Oceanside NB. It has looked at the use of, first, the immigration system, and then the TFWP to create employer access to

a workforce that is easily raced as well as gendered, and that typifies an ideal worker. The labour shortages were looked at from an employer and employee perspective in both aquaculture and capture seafood processing plants, where it became clearer that perceived labour shortages were more qualitative than quantitative in nature, with local applicants no longer meeting the requirements for hiring. The international migrant workers, while described in positive terms by both employers and fellow employees, also faced some tensions, by being given priority for shifts over the domestic workforce, both from NB and NL. The migrant workers coming in through the TFWP were also shown to be vulnerable due to their lack of experience and low language skills in combination with a lack of a neutral body to which to report complaints or concerns. The variability and extent to the shifts that workers were being asked to work posed potential problems in terms of these workers accessing daycare (which has always been an issue for workers in this industry, but migrant workers especially lack local social support systems). In addition, the lack of citizenship rights, and the lengthy process of attaining permanent residency, meant that this workforce, even if staying permanently in NB, is politically disenfranchised for an extended period of time while living in the community. Finally, the community was affected by the influx of the migrant workers, mostly in ways that participants described as positive, including increasing multiculturalism and helping to increase or maintain population rates as well as house prices. However, one of the negative effects was a large increase in rental housing prices in the area, which affected both NL workers engaging in E-RGM on a seasonal basis and local community members who did not own their own homes.

This chapter argued that the TFWP constructs a specific type of workforce by focusing on how the labour shortages in seafood processing in Oceanside are partly based on a shortage of a specific type of worker and not necessarily on a shortage of workers. Using the TFWP in the seafood processing industry has helped employers create a workforce that matches the rhythm of corporate capitalism better than did the workforce that either resided in the community or engaged in seasonal, circular employment-related mobility. The work/life rhythm mismatch is especially acute for those with family or other life commitments outside of work who may find it harder to meet the year-round, just-in-time flexibility than do the workers coming through the TFWP (most workers who migrate for employment do so without their families). The argument put forth in this chapter is that the use of a migrant workforce created by the TFWP is a revision of older labour methods that have played out throughout the history of capital accumulation to remake labour forces, so while the policy is new, the method is old. Because the TFWP is based on older labour regimes, many of its weaknesses that allow for exploitation and abuse of workers within the program, and its negative impacts on the local workforce, can be tied to its racialized (and gendered) colonial roots, which, even with recent amendments to the TFWP, still exist. Thus, labour shortages are both real and created.

These workers are conscious of their loss of power, and one of the many issues facing them is their lack of ability to challenge it. While migrant workers are becoming permanent residents, buying homes and cars, and bringing their spouses and children in to the country, along with extended families to help bolster their community's numbers, these workers are working within a program whose very structure severely limits their

security.

The shortcomings of this program as it was in 2012, when I conducted my research, included a high risk of exploitation and harm, as well as the inherent inequality built into the program, which created discriminatory biases based on sex, gender, and class. While the TFWP has been extensively overhauled since 2012, there should still be significant critique of and concern for the underlying structural basis for the program as it currently exists.

What the program has not dealt with is the racial and gendered framework and citizenship gap that underrides it, and especially the workers' status as temporary – bringing in people to work, essentially tying them to one employer, has been shown to be fraught with abuse. Indentured labour of this type should never be approved. It is this format that serves to increase segmentation, fragmentation, and precariousness for all workers, and that also uses stereotypes to segregate workers based on race, gender, and class. An important question is whether the TFWP is just a continuation of a privatization process, essentially privatizing immigration so that businesses now own and control immigrants through work. And will the use of the TFWP become regional, or company policy? If this is the case, this may have far-reaching consequences due to the increased horizontal and vertical integration of corporations. Is this not just a new form of contract labour – or slavery? And what of the backlash against the program? The nationalist rhetoric around “Canadian workers” and “Canadian jobs” neglects the fact that we still allow an immigration program that allows workers (especially from poorer countries) to come to Canada to do low-skilled, low-paid, dangerous work to strengthen our economy,

without ensuring that these workers can become citizens. There is a need to be careful that we do not repeat history and start implementing racist policies under the guise of a national rhetoric of “protecting Canadian workers.” Crucial to this is the relationship among work, mobility, citizenship, and power. Grosfoguel et al. (2014) argue for the importance of colonial legacies and racism in understanding how complex power constellations sort migrants above or below a “zone of being” – in other words, sorting those who are seen and treated as human beings separately from those who are not. This human/non-human line is crucial to understanding the significance of allowing an immigration policy such as Canada’s TFWP to exist. This case study of seafood processing in NB exemplifies how the TFWP creates a quasi-indentured workforce with restricted citizen rights and gives employers control over an individual’s ability to remain in Canada. It also creates a highly competitive, mobile, just-in-time workforce, affecting all workers in the industry, their work-life rhythms, and their communities.

## 9 Conclusion

### 9.1 The Paradox

This dissertation provided an examination and comparison of the processes that have influenced the number and quality of jobs associated with both capture and intensive salmon aquaculture seafood processing in Oceanside. A central focus was on *how* labour-force composition has occurred in seafood processing in this province up to 2012, and how this has interacted with reported labour shortages in the industry in recent decades, justifying the use of the TFWP.

This thesis was an exploratory case study, based on semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and participant observation, that was designed, executed, and analyzed within a qualitative framework. Multiple methods used in this case study help to bring to the fore the power dynamics in narratives; the use of the documents provided the more overarching data on changes in corporate structures, labour shortages in seafood processing and the use of the TFWP, while the case-study approach, including the participant observation and interviews, provided more contextual narratives of those associated with the seafood processing industry in a specific region where labour shortages, high unemployment, and the TFWP coexist.

I drew on insights from feminist political economy, financialization literatures, and the mobility literatures that discuss citizenship and precarious labour from intersectional perspectives, and used the metaphor of a rhythm mismatch to answer my research questions. Chapter four looked at who worked in the seafood processing industry

in this region from the late 19th century to 1980. The relationship shift between labour and capital within seafood processing in Oceanside from the late 19th-century company-town model to more global, corporate capital models was understood through the larger sociopolitical economic shifts that were occurring as Keynesian welfare state ideologies began to retreat, replaced by new neoliberal ones. This saw a retracting of company obligations to workers and communities, the introduction and then restructuring of the EI system, and an unsuccessful attempt at unionization in the processing plants. Interesting insights regarding the history of an early, mobile immigrant workforce, made immobile and tightly controlled through the company's role in the obtaining of citizenship, were uncovered.

Chapter 5 looked at how neoliberalism and corporate capitalism shaped the NB capture seafood industry between 1980 and 2014. Capital and corporations are currently, and increasingly, multinational and financialized in their composition; they are also heavily entrenched and dependent on nation states, and within those, regional (and in this case provincial and county-level) political economies (and ecologies) through geographical locations. Policies at the national (and sometimes provincial or regional) levels are currently working alongside corporations in eroding labour protection policies such as Employment Insurance, and opening up work-related mobility across nations. The relationship among transnational corporations and global, as well as multinational, financial institutions is most evident in the example of private equity, as a majority of the financial backing for these acquisitions is achieved through multinational banks, and corporations become bound to meet their returns on investment. In many cases, including

that of Oceanside, this is done by eroding community and worker commitments and looking to cut costs wherever possible.

Chapter 6 investigated how the development and consolidation of ownership in the aquaculture industry affected employment in seafood processing in the study region. While the aquaculture and capture companies provide different types of fish products via different commodity-chains, their similarities lie in their dedication to remaining competitive within the global economy, as well as their reliance upon national- and provincial-level underwriting (through policies and funding), and their overlapping interactions with the local community and its citizen workforce. Capital accumulation via constant growth and profit in Oceanside was tied to the ability of both the product and workers to align with the rhythm of capital accumulation. The consequences of the growth in the aquaculture industry in Oceanside included changes to the rhythm of the fishing industry, including the seafood processing industry. Aquaculture in Oceanside has been successful on the global level, and thus has provided some local jobs, but not always for local workers, as it brings in many workers through the TFWP.

Who currently works in different parts of the capture seafood processing and aquaculture sectors was first investigated in chapter 7, which looked at the local labour force in Oceanside in 2012, and the reluctance of young local workers to work in the processing plants. This chapter also discussed the declining interprovincial NL workforce and the multiple changes to the work environment, including wage decreases, changing shifts, and loss of seniority, that were deterring local and migrant NL workers from working in the plants. Most likely, the decrease in number of both local and NL labourers

within the seafood processing plants in NB came about via a process of corporate-level strategies at the human resource level, as well as the production and technological levels. These strategies seem to have created unwelcoming and unhealthy work environments, ultimately deterring the younger workers from entering this occupation, and even more significantly, pushing out some of the sector's most loyal and hard-working employees. This, in a sense, is an example of corporations rescinding their part of the loyalty pact with workers. When labour agency is removed, especially in a non-unionized environment, workers become vulnerable, anxious, and stressed, and begin to look elsewhere for employment that is less precarious.

Chapter 8 looked more closely at the racialized and internationally sourced migrant workforce. This chapter and the previous one also looked at how nuanced narratives played an important role in establishing a discourse around labour shortages that allowed workers to manufacture a labour shortage. Argued in this thesis is that the labour shortage argument in NB is largely based on a shortage of a specific type of worker, not necessarily on a shortage of workers.

New labourers in NB seafood processing plants (as well as, to a smaller extent, in BC) are comprised of workers coming in through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. This dissertation connects the use of the TFWP program with larger trends in other food-related industries in Canada, as well as other developed countries, towards increased use of low-skilled circular migrant workers. Not only has the use of these programs increased, it has coincided with decreased work quality and pay, and increased work flexibility, labour segmentation, and precariousness. The use of the TFWP by

corporations also, in a sense, seems to be reinstating a new paternal corporate model using strategies to redefine the loyalty pact between corporations and workers, similar to early paternal capitalist models in which not only was the worker taken care of, but entire families were supported and encouraged by the firm, and the community. While workers brought in through the TFWP were seen to be aiding community improvement by becoming permanent residents, living in communities, and raising their families, the very structure of the program under which these people are working severely limits their security.

The final analysis of this dissertation was the inherent inequality built into the TFWP, which created discriminatory biases based on sex, gender, and class. Since my fieldwork, the TFWP has been overhauled but the maintaining of separate citizenship rights retains (and thus allows for the re-creation of) an inherently unequal and potentially exploited labour force.

## **9.2 Contribution to the Literature**

This dissertation makes multiple contributions to multiple bodies of literature. First, it provides a much-needed snapshot of seafood processing labour in NB in the twenty-first century that takes into account new labour regimes and capitalization, including corporate and financial power, through financialization. Second, it provides a qualitative study of labour in aquaculture, both of which are significantly lacking in recent, as well as historical, scholarship. Third, within the research on TFWs, this work provides a historical overview of labour change over time to look at how the TFWP was used in areas previously defined by local and then regional labour markets. This differs from

current research that looks at the TFWP more broadly, and across many different industries (such as agriculture). In addition, this research provides a case study of migrant workers brought in under the low-skill program. This differs from the focus of other researchers, who have investigated the agricultural program, hospitality and food services, or the live-in caregivers' program. And fourth, this research contributes to the literature on mobilities and labour by providing a case study that includes multiple employment-related mobilities and (im)mobilities within one industry and geographic location, which is otherwise currently lacking in both fisheries and mobilities literatures.

### **9.3 Lessons from the Field**

A complement to this research would be to do further interviews with workers, especially migrant workers, both provincial and international, to get a broader sense of what workers are experiencing and feeling. While the data I did have may be construed as portraying corporations as bad corporate citizens, I have tried to place this in the context of an analysis of power dynamics, which ties itself to finance and politics at local, national, and international scales. One aquaculture company, Small Fish Farm, offers an example of a corporate model that is not experiencing retention or labour-shortage issues, and actually does hire workers who have lived in the community for years, as well as newcomers, but has not bound them in a paternalistic way. Corporations are not inherently evil, and aquaculture itself is not automatically negative for the community. The negative aspects come into play when power imbalances are such that new forms and or processes of exploitation of a labour force can occur.

There is also ambiguity for managers, as they represent their companies to a

greater extent than the employee on the floor, yet they, too, work for these companies. They have the extra burden of doing the dirty work of cost-saving as part of their jobs. They are hired to cut costs and meet targets, and remain employed by meeting these goals. Labour is a huge cost for corporations, and even managers are at risk of losing their livelihoods. The managers who spoke with me all spoke from the company perspective, but they all also spoke with me. They are employees who are susceptible to larger labour trends towards flexibility and precocity. As such, I recognize that all of the managers except one had been recently hired by their companies, and were dealing with labour issues in a very difficult era.

#### **9.4 Future Research**

The idea of qualitative aspects of labour shortages is a relevant one for many areas of rural Canada that have seen an increase in dependency on the TFWP. Changes to the program in 2014 were implemented under the auspices of decreasing the exploitation and reliance of TFWs, but the 2016 exemption from these changes for the seafood processing industry raises questions regarding whether this will happen in other industries as well. The validity of labour shortages under whose umbrella these industries lobby is therefore a crucial area of study, for workers as well as for policy.

Another area that should be further explored is how companies that are increasingly multinational conglomerates are availing themselves of intercompany transfers, moving their migrant labourers to different jobs within the same company. This may allow companies to bring workers into one area in which labour shortages exist, and then move them to other areas. Building on this, is the use of the TFWP a company

strategy that can be employed wherever companies are located? Or is it more location-specific, with companies only using it in specific regions? And how does this fit into larger capital flows?

The linking of the ecological resource, fish, with the labour process, is an area upon which future research can expand, as this is an important aspect of work that is rarely highlighted. A theoretical gap in the political ecological literature exists. Missing are the ways in which health links workers to environments (in this specific case, pertaining to aquaculture) that go beyond notions of food health, or resource and environmental health, to include employment and community health. There is a need for more inclusive and relational understanding of health, community, labour, and the environment that moves beyond the traditional argument that pits environmental health against labour health. The high-paced, high-production, year-round, full-time work model that is standard in aquaculture processing plants applies not just to workers and their work/life balance, but also to the way salmon are raised, reared, and killed. How seafood processing labour and work organization within aquaculture-dominated communities is shifting to fit economic business models that are specifically tied to the global competitiveness of the aquaculture industry, and the few multinational corporations that dominate it, should be explored in other provinces in which aquaculture is expanding, such as Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

And overall, the bigger-picture issue here is the relatively high number of food-oriented companies increasingly using financialization processes that engage in the use of some form of migrant cheap labour. The awareness of financialization processes

occurring in this region and industry came out of the research process, and thus were not included in the original research design and methods. Future research with attention to understanding and gleaning information specifically on financialization processes, and its link to labour are greatly needed. In addition, agriculture companies have access to workers through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, part of the NAFTA trade agreement, who come from countries that allow a continual migration of cheap workers who are paid much less than minimum wage. The labour forces of meat processing and fish processing plants are now dominated by migrant workers brought in through the TFWP. What does this say about fair wages and food? There is an interesting connection among financialization, cheap food and cheap labour that should be explored.

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## **Appendix 1: Telephone Scripts**

### **Telephone Script for Management Personnel/Key Informants**

Hello, my name is Christine Knott. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University in Newfoundland. As part of my PhD thesis, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Neis and Dr. Nicole Power in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University, that is funded by SSHRC and Safetynet Research Centre at Memorial. I am studying how and why seafood processing labour forces have changed over the past several years in both aquaculture and wild fisheries in the region. I am also interested in learning about the changing economic contributions of aquaculture and wild fisheries to communities with fish plants in the region.

I am contacting you today to see if you would be willing to participate in a face-to-face interview. My research is about the changing labour forces in seafood processing in New Brunswick and about the changing relationship between processing plants and local communities. I am interested in hearing about past and present changes in the industry from seafood processing workers and others in this and other communities.

During the interview, I will ask about yourself and then I will ask you to tell me about who worked in the plant when it was first established and the types of jobs that they did. I will also ask about any changes that have taken place in the plant labour force in terms of where they come from, age, gender, and who does what jobs over time. I will ask about things you think might explain these changes (including changes at work, like mechanization). I will ask about any challenges you have experienced with recruiting and retaining workers for the plant, and your strategies for dealing with these challenges. I will also ask about your knowledge of the contribution of the plant to local businesses and the local community.

The interview will take approximately an hour of your time. Participation is free and voluntary and, should you agree to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any questions and to stop participating in the interview at any point.

If possible, I would also be interested in an opportunity to tour the plant before or after the interview.

Local number: toll free at 1-855-871-3939

Or my number: [REDACTED]

## **Community Organization Telephone Script**

Hello, my name is Christine Knott. I am a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University in Newfoundland, My research is about the changing labour forces in seafood processing in New Brunswick and about the changing relationship between processing plants and local communities and the changing economic contributions of aquaculture and wild fisheries to communities with fish plants in the area.

Therefore I am conducting local businesses in the area to ask if they would be willing to participate in a face-to-face interview.

The interview will take about half an hour to an hour to complete. Participation is free and voluntary and should you agree to participate, you are free to refuse to answer any questions and to stop participating in the interview at any point.

During the interview, you will be asked a few questions about yourself. Then you will be asked to talk about your observations of the aquaculture and wild seafood processing industries in this region. We will talk about the history of these industries and your perceptions of the changing contributions, positive and negative, they make to your business, to other businesses in the area and to the local community.

My research is under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Neis and Dr. Nicole Power in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University, and is funded by SSHRC and SafetyNet Research Centre at Memorial.

toll free at 1-855-871-3939

Or my number: XXXXXXXXXX

## Appendix 2: Information Flyer

Department of Sociology  
Memorial University of Newfoundland  
St. John's, NL, A1C 5S7  
Phone [REDACTED]  
[christine.knott@mun.ca](mailto:christine.knott@mun.ca)

Attention Seafood Processing Workers:

I am a graduate student at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and am looking for current and former seafood processing workers who would be willing to be interviewed for my doctoral research.

My research is about:

- changing labour in seafood processing in New Brunswick
- changing relationship between processing plants and local communities

I am interested in hearing about

- past and present changes in the industry
- how people end up working in the industry
- the rewards and challenges they associate with this work
- learning about who is no longer in the industry and why

I would like to speak with seafood processing workers because their views are not often documented or collected, and therefore not included in discussions and decision-making about the future of this industry.

Participation is voluntary, and participants can refuse to answer questions.

You reserve the right to withdraw from the study, even after the interview is over. Names of communities, plants and study participants will not be used in any of resulting reports, presentations, thesis and publications.

If you are interested in participating in this study, or have any questions, please feel free to call me at [REDACTED] or email me at [christine.knott@mun.ca](mailto:christine.knott@mun.ca) at your convenience. Thank you.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated

or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at [icehr@mun.ca](mailto:icehr@mun.ca), or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

## Appendix 3: Consent Forms

Consent Form – Current and Former Seafood Processing Workers

### **Title: Aquaculture and Wild Seafood Processing Labour and Rural Coastal Communities in NB.**

Researcher: Christine Knott  
Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Sociology,  
Memorial University of Newfoundland  
[christine.knott@mun.ca](mailto:christine.knott@mun.ca) / [REDACTED]

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time until the thesis is completed or final results are published, whichever comes first. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Christine Knott, if you have any questions about the study or for more information not included here before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

#### **Introduction**

As part of the research for my doctoral thesis at Memorial University, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Neis and Dr. Nicole Power in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University.

I am studying how and why seafood processing labour forces have changed over the past several years in both aquaculture and wild fisheries in the region. I am also interested in learning about the changing economic contributions of aquaculture and wild fisheries to communities with fish plants in the region.

Your participation will include an interview, lasting approximately 60–120 minutes. The length of the interview will depend on your knowledge about the industry and how much you wish to say.

Funding: This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and by the SafetyNet Centre for Research at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

### Purpose of study:

There is some evidence that fish plant labour forces have been changing in New Brunswick in the past several years. The purpose of this study is to understand how and why these labour forces have changed. It is also to understand how these changes have affected employers, workers and the contribution of seafood processing in the aquaculture and wild fish sectors to the local economy. Therefore, interviews will be held with seafood processing managers/owners and employees as well as with business owners and community and organization leaders in communities where seafood processing plants are located.

### **What you will do in this study:**

You are being asked to participate in an audiotaped interview. Your participation is free and voluntary. If you consent to participate, what and how much you say are entirely up to you. You may refuse to answer any of the questions. You also have the choice to be audio-recorded or not. The purpose of audio-recording is to ensure my research accurately captures the information provided by participants.

During the discussion, I will start by asking you a few questions about yourself: your age, citizenship, where you live, where you work, your job, etc. You will then be asked to talk about your work history in seafood processing (including how you found any jobs you have had), and any changes you have experienced or noticed over time in your work. Possible changes we might explore are changes in where you have worked, your jobs, hours of work, season length, job security, work responsibilities, wages, and your ability to keep doing the job, over your career. I will also ask about how you get to and from work, whether you need to maintain two residences and if so, how you do that, and more generally about how the location of the plants you have worked in has affected you, your family and your ability to stay in a particular job/plant. If you live in a different community, province or country from the one in which you work, I will ask you to talk about how, if at all, this affects you, your work and your family. I will also ask about any concerns or thoughts, both positive and negative, you might have about changes in your work and about continuing to work in seafood processing (including reasons why you left the industry, if you did).

### **Length of time:**

Our meeting today will probably last 1–2 hours, depending on how much you have to say.

### **Withdrawal from the study:**

You are free to withdraw from the research project at any time, up until the thesis is submitted and final results are published, whichever comes first. If you wish to withdraw, please contact the researcher, Christine Knott. If you withdraw after an interview has taken place, the audio recording will be deleted, and the transcripts shredded. There are

no consequences associated with withdrawing from this study.

**Possible benefits:**

**It is not known whether this study will benefit you personally.** It will provide an opportunity for you to talk about your knowledge, feelings, concerns and ideas regarding the seafood processing industries and local communities where these industries are located.

**Possible risks and discomforts:**

1. As an employee, you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. Feel free to refuse to answer any questions put to you.
2. The research may generate some conflicting views and, from some, some negative views about this workplace and its relationship to the local community. I have tried to address this possibility by ensuring I sample from a broad range of groups including management, workers and local businesses and other groups. As explained below, I have taken steps to ensure your confidentiality. None of the interviewees, companies, plants, or communities associated with this research will be named in the resulting reports, presentations and publications. The list of participants will be securely stored in a password-protected file to which only myself and my supervisors will have access. However, someone who knows the history of your plant and the region well may be able to identify the plant/company.
3. It is possible that some of these findings will be of interest to policy makers in New Brunswick and elsewhere. Policy makers will have access only to the general findings in resulting reports, presentations, the thesis and publications, not to the list of participants or of companies, plants and communities. If you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you may refuse to answer at any time.

There is a difference between confidentiality and anonymity. Confidentiality is ensuring that identities of participants are accessible only to those authorized to have access. Anonymity is a result of not disclosing a participant's identifying characteristics (such as name or description of physical appearance).

**Confidentiality and Storage of Data:**

- a. The list of participants will be kept confidential, and your name, your company name, and community name will not be used in any of the reports or publications produced from this study. Participants' general occupations will be identified in the final thesis, presentations and publications only using broad terms such as seafood plant worker, management, business owner/manager, or organization or community leader.
- b. Each interview will be assigned a number. The list linking these numbers with participants' names will be stored in a separate location from the interview notes,

transcripts and tapes. Access to the list will be limited to only the researcher. Once the information on the tapes has been typed up, the tapes will be stored in a locked location and will be retained for a minimum of five years after publication, as per Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

**Anonymity:**

Plant and community anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed due to the limited number of seafood processing operations in New Brunswick, and the small communities in which they are located, and local knowledge about particular plants. This means that someone knowledgeable about the history of your plant might be able to determine it was part of the study. Your employer or close colleagues may know you participated in the study and may be able to identify descriptions of your plant. However, every reasonable effort will be made to assure that your identity is protected. Your community will not be named and neither you nor your company will be identified by name or personal description in any presentations, reports and publications.

**Recording of Data:**

This interview will be audio recorded if you agree to it. You have the choice to refuse or allow the use of the digital recorder, but taping the interview will help me to get more accurate and detailed information. If you allow the use of the digital recorder, you can ask to have it turned off at anytime. The digital recording will be securely stored separately from the list of participants and from the transcripts.

If you are uncomfortable with the digital recorder, I can take notes instead.

**Reporting of Results:**

The information that I collect from this interview will be used in my doctoral thesis, and may also be used in journal articles and conference and other presentations. I will present general findings from the different groups interviewed and illustrate those general findings with quotes from the interviews. These quotes will, where necessary, be edited to remove any identifying information. Names of companies, communities and individuals will be replaced with pseudonyms.

**Sharing of Results with Participants:**

A plain-language report will be posted on the SafetyNet Research Centre website: <http://www.safetynet.mun.ca>. The report should be available by August 2013. If you would like to be sent a copy of this report, please contact me and I will email or mail you a copy. My contact information is provided on this consent form.

**Questions:**

You have been given a copy of this consent form.

If you have any questions about taking part in this study, you can talk with the investigator who is in charge of the study at this institution. That person is:

**Christine Knott:** [REDACTED], [christine.knott@mun.ca](mailto:christine.knott@mun.ca)

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at [icehr@mun.ca](mailto:icehr@mun.ca), or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

**Consent:**

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at anytime, up until the thesis is completed or final results are published, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed.

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

**Your signature means:**

- I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.
- I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation at any time.
- I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview.
- I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the interview.
- A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

---

Signature of participant

---

Date

**Researcher's Signature:**

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers.

I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

---

Signature of participant

---

Date

Consent Form – Business Owners

**Title: Aquaculture and Wild Seafood Processing Labour and Rural Coastal Communities in NB.**

Researcher: Christine Knott  
Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Sociology,  
Memorial University of Newfoundland  
[christine.knott@mun.ca](mailto:christine.knott@mun.ca) / [REDACTED]

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time until the thesis is completed or final results are published, whichever comes first. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Christine Knott, if you have any questions about the study or for more information not included here before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research, or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

**Introduction**

As part of the research for my doctoral thesis at Memorial University, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Neis and Dr. Nicole Power in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University.

I am studying how and why seafood processing labour forces have changed over the past several years in both aquaculture and wild fisheries in the region. I am also interested in learning about the changing economic contributions of aquaculture and wild fisheries to communities with fish plants in the region.

Your participation will include an interview, lasting approximately 60–120 minutes. The length of the interview will depend on your knowledge about the industry and how much you wish to say.

**Funding:** This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and by the SafetyNet Centre for Research at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

**Purpose of study:**

There is some evidence that fish plant labour forces have been changing in New Brunswick in the past several years. The purpose of this study is to understand how and why these labour forces have changed. It is also to understand how these changes have affected employers, workers and the contribution of seafood processing in the aquaculture and wild fish sectors to the local economy. Therefore, interviews will be held with seafood processing managers/owners and employees as well as with business owners and community and organization leaders in communities where seafood processing plants are located.

**What you will do in this study:**

You are being asked to participate in an audiotaped interview. Your participation is free and voluntary. If you consent to participate, what and how much you say are entirely up to you. You may refuse to answer any of the questions. You also have the choice to be audio-recorded or not. The purpose of audio-recording is to ensure my research accurately captures the information provided by participants.

During the discussion, you will be asked a few questions about yourself: your age, citizenship, where you live, where you work, your job, etc. You will then be asked to talk about your observations of the aquaculture and wild seafood processing industries in this region. We will talk about the history of these industries and your perceptions of the changing contributions, positive and negative, they make to your business, to other businesses in the area and to the local community.

**Length of time:**

Our meeting today will probably last ½ -1 hour, depending on how much you have to say.

**Withdrawal from the study:**

You are free to withdraw from the research project at any time, up until the thesis is submitted and final results are published, whichever comes first. If you wish to withdraw please contact the researcher, Christine Knott. If you withdraw after an interview has taken place, the audio recording will be deleted, and the transcripts shredded. There are no consequences associated with withdrawing from this study.

**Possible benefits:**

**It is not known whether this study will benefit you personally.** It will provide an opportunity for you to talk about your knowledge, feelings, concerns and ideas regarding the seafood processing industries and local communities where these industries are located.

**Possible risks and discomforts:**

1. As explained below, I have taken steps to ensure your confidentiality. None of the interviewees, companies, plants, or communities associated with this research will

be named in the resulting reports, presentations and publications. The list of participants will be securely stored in a password-protected file to which only myself and my supervisors will have access. However, someone who knows the region well may be able to identify the company.

2. It is possible that some of these findings will be of interest to policy makers in New Brunswick and elsewhere. Policy makers will have access only to the general findings in resulting reports, presentations, the thesis and publications, not to the list of participants or of companies, plants and communities. If you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you may refuse to answer at any time.

### **Confidentiality vs. Anonymity**

There is a difference between confidentiality and anonymity. Confidentiality is ensuring that identities of participants are accessible only to those authorized to have access.

Anonymity is a result of not disclosing a participant's identifying characteristics (such as name or description of physical appearance).

### **Confidentiality and Storage of Data:**

a. The list of participants will be kept confidential, and your name, your company name, and community name will not be used in any of the reports or publications produced from this study. Participants' general occupations will be identified in the final thesis, presentations and publications only using broad terms such as seafood plant worker, management, business owner/manager, or organization or community leader.

b. Each interview will be assigned a number. The list linking these numbers with participant's names will be stored in a separate location from the interview notes, transcripts and tapes. Access to the list will be limited to only the researcher. Once the information on the tapes has been typed up, the audio recordings will be stored in a locked location and will be retained for a minimum of five years following publication, as per Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

### **Anonymity:**

While anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed due to the limited number of processing operations in New Brunswick, and the small communities they are in, every reasonable effort will be made to assure that your identity is protected. Your community will not be named and neither you nor your company will be identified by name or personal description in any reports and publications.

### **Recording of Data:**

This interview will be audio recorded if you agree to it. You have the choice to refuse or allow the use of the digital recorder, but taping the interview will help me to get more accurate and detailed information. If you allow the use of the digital recorder, you can ask to have it turned off at anytime The digital recording will be securely stored separately from the list of participants and from the transcripts.

If you are uncomfortable with the digital recorder, I can take notes instead.

**Reporting of Results:**

The information that I collect from this interview will be used in my doctoral thesis, and may also be used in journal articles and conference and other presentations. I will present general findings from the different groups interviewed and illustrate those general findings with quotes from the interviews. These quotes will, where necessary, be edited to remove any identifying information. Names of companies, communities and individuals will be replaced with pseudonyms.

**Sharing of Results with Participants:**

A plain-language report will be posted on the SafetyNet Research Centre website: <http://www.safetynet.mun.ca>. The report should be available by August 2013. If you would like to be sent a copy of this report, please contact me and I will email or mail you a copy. My contact information is provided on this consent form.

**Questions:**

You have been given a copy of this consent form.

If you have any questions about taking part in this study, you can talk with the investigator who is in charge of the study at this institution. That person is:

Christine Knott: [REDACTED], [christine.knott@mun.ca](mailto:christine.knott@mun.ca)

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at [icehr@mun.ca](mailto:icehr@mun.ca) or by telephone at [REDACTED].

**Consent:**

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at anytime, up until the thesis is completed or final results are published, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed.

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the

researchers from their professional responsibilities.

**Your signature means:**

- I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.
- I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation at any time.
- I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview.
- I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the interview.
- A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Researcher's Signature:**

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Consent Form – Seafood Processing Management

**Title: Aquaculture and Wild Seafood Processing Labour and Rural Coastal Communities in NB.**

Researcher: Christine Knott  
Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Sociology,  
Memorial University of Newfoundland  
[christine.knott@mun.ca](mailto:christine.knott@mun.ca) / [REDACTED]

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time until the thesis is completed or final results are published, whichever comes first. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Christine Knott, if you have any questions about the study or for more information not included here before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research, or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

**Introduction**

As part of the research for my doctoral thesis at Memorial University, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Neis and Dr. Nicole Power in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University.

I am studying how and why seafood processing labour forces have changed over the past several years in both aquaculture and wild fisheries in the region. I am also interested in learning about the changing economic contributions of aquaculture and wild fisheries to communities with fish plants in the region.

Your participation will include an interview, lasting approximately 60–120 minutes. The length of the interview will depend on your knowledge about the industry and how much you wish to say.

Funding: This research is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and by the SafetyNet Centre for Research at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Purpose of study:

There is some evidence that fish plant labour forces have been changing in New

Brunswick in the past several years. The purpose of this study is to understand how and why these labour forces have changed. It is also to understand how these changes have affected employers, workers and the contribution of seafood processing in the aquaculture and wild fish sectors to the local economy. Therefore, interviews will be held with seafood processing managers/owners and employees as well as with business owners and community and organization leaders in communities where seafood processing plants are located.

**What you will do in this study:**

You are being asked to participate in an audiotaped interview. Your participation is free and voluntary. If you consent to participate, what and how much you say are entirely up to you. You may refuse to answer any of the questions. You also have the choice to be audio-recorded or not. The purpose of audio-recording is to ensure my research accurately captures the information provided by participants.

During the discussion, I will ask about yourself (your age, past and current work experience, etc.). Then I will ask you to tell me about who worked in the plant when it was first established and the types of jobs that they did. I will also ask about any changes that have taken place in the plant labour force in terms of where they come from, age, gender, who does what jobs over time. I will ask about things you think might explain these changes (including changes at work, like mechanization). I will ask about any challenges you have experienced with recruiting and retaining workers for the plant, and your strategies for dealing with these challenges. I will also ask about your knowledge of the contribution of the plant to local businesses and the local community.

**Length of time:**

Our meeting today will probably last 1–2 hours, depending on how much you have to say.

**Withdrawal from the study:**

You are free to withdraw from the research project at any time, up until the thesis is submitted and final results are published, whichever comes first. If you wish to withdraw please contact the researcher, Christine Knott. If you withdraw after an interview has taken place, the audio recording will be deleted, and the transcripts shredded. There are no consequences associated with withdrawing from this study.

**Possible benefits:**

**It is not known whether this study will benefit you personally.** It will provide an opportunity for you to talk about your knowledge, feelings, concerns and ideas regarding the seafood processing industries and local communities where these industries are located.

**Possible risks and discomforts:**

1. As a management employee or owner, you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. Feel free to refuse to answer any questions put to you.
2. The research may generate some conflicting views and, from some, some negative views about this workplace and its relationship to the local community. I have tried to address this possibility by ensuring I sample from a broad range of groups including management, workers and local businesses and other groups. As explained below, I have taken steps to ensure your confidentiality. None of the interviewees, companies, plants, or communities associated with this research will be named in the resulting reports, presentations and publications. The list of participants will be securely stored in a password-protected file to which only myself and my supervisors will have access. However, someone who knows the history of your plant and the region well may be able to identify the plant/company.
3. It is possible that some of these findings will be of interest to policymakers in New Brunswick and elsewhere. Policymakers will have access only to the general findings in resulting reports, presentations, the thesis and publications, not to the list of participants or of companies, plants and communities. If you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you may refuse to answer at any time.

### **Confidentiality vs. Anonymity**

There is a difference between confidentiality and anonymity. Confidentiality is ensuring that identities of participants are accessible only to those authorized to have access.

Anonymity is a result of not disclosing participants' identifying characteristics (such as name or description of physical appearance).

### **Confidentiality and Storage of Data:**

*a.* The list of participants will be kept confidential, and your name, your company name, and community name will not be used in any of the reports or publications produced from this study. Participants' general occupations will be identified in the final thesis, presentations and publications only using broad terms such as seafood plant worker, management, business owner/manager, or organization or community leader.

*b.* Each interview will be assigned a number. The list linking these numbers with participant's names will be stored in a separate location from the interview notes, transcripts and tapes. Access to the list will be limited to only the researcher. Once the information on the tapes has been typed up, the audio recordings will be stored in a locked location and will be retained for a minimum of five years following publication, as per Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

### **Anonymity:**

Plant and community anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed due to the limited number of seafood processing operations in New Brunswick, and the small communities in which

they are located, and local knowledge about particular plants. This means that someone knowledgeable about the history of your plant might be able to determine it was part of the study. Your employer or close colleagues may know you participated in the study and may be able to identify descriptions of your plant and, possibly, quotes taken from your transcript. However, every reasonable effort will be made to assure that your identity is protected. Your community will not be named and neither you nor your company will be identified by name or personal description in any presentations, reports and publications.

**Recording of Data:**

This interview will be audio recorded if you agree to it. You have the choice to refuse or allow the use of the digital recorder, but taping the interview will help me to get more accurate and detailed information. If you allow the use of the digital recorder, you can ask to have it turned off at anytime. The digital recording will be securely stored separately from the list of participants and from the transcripts.

If you are uncomfortable with the digital recorder, I can take notes instead.

**Reporting of Results:**

The information that I collect from this interview will be used in my doctoral thesis, and may also be used in plain language reports (including to interested participants), journal articles and conference and other presentations. I will present general findings from the different groups interviewed and illustrate those general findings with quotes from the interviews. These quotes will, where necessary, be edited to remove any identifying information. Names of companies, communities and individuals will be replaced with pseudonyms.

**Sharing of Results with Participants:**

A plain-language report will be posted on the Safetynet Research Centre website: <http://www.safetynet.mun.ca>. The report should be available by August 2013. If you would like to be sent a copy of this report, please contact me and I will email or mail you a copy. My contact information is provided on this consent form.

**Questions:**

You have been given a copy of this consent form.

If you have any questions about taking part in this study, you can talk with the investigator who is in charge of the study at this institution. That person is:

**Christine Knott:** [REDACTED], [christine.knott@mun.ca](mailto:christine.knott@mun.ca)

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the

ICEHR at [icehr@mun.ca](mailto:icehr@mun.ca) or by telephone at [REDACTED].

**Consent:**

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at anytime, up until the thesis is completed or final results are published, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed.

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

**Your signature means:**

- I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered
- I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation at any time.
- I agree to be audio-recorded during the interview.
- I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the interview.
- A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Researcher's Signature:**

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix 4 Interview Schedules**

### **Seafood Processing Management Draft Interview Schedule**

*Do you have any questions before we start?*

I would like to start with a few quick demographic questions I am asking all of my participants.

#### **Work History**

1) Let's start with your employment history.

Do you live close to where you work?

Companies you have worked for?

Communities where you have worked?

Communities where you have lived?

Jobs you have done over your career

What does your current job entail?

How long have you worked here?

What do you like about this job? What don't you like?

Can you see yourself working in this job in five years? Ten? Explain.

2) Tell me about the plants you have worked in starting with the first plant and ending with this one.

Aquaculture versus wild seafood processing?

Species processed?

Final products?

Seasonal versus year-'round work?

Community where it was/is located?

Your job in that plant?

How long you did the job and what it entailed?

General changes in the plant when you worked there – seasonality, mechanization, labour force...

3) Is there anything else about your work history that you would like to tell me about?

#### **Employees**

1) Tell me about the labour forces in the different plants where you have worked.

How many? (High season? Low season?)

Female/Male?  
Communities where they lived?  
How they were recruited?  
Level of turnover in the labour force (during season/from year to year)  
Challenges with recruitment? Retention? Strategies for dealing with this?  
(i.e. Recruitment: word of mouth, HR firm to recruit? Advertising?)\_  
For workers from outside the community- transportation costs? Housing? Schools for children? Spousal hires?)  
Work Scheduling – how it worked? Challenges?

Men's jobs and women's jobs?  
Average weekly wages/ annual wages?  
Incentive system?  
Job security for the workers? A seniority system? Chance for advancement? Benefits- sickness, disability, pension?  
Local workers (this area) versus workers from away – different experiences with these? Did they tend to do different jobs?

2) Labour force changes over time – in this region? In this plant? Describe the changes (in general terms) and talk about why, in your opinion, these changes have happened.

3) Have you hired, or thought about hiring TFW? Tell me about this (how did you learn about the program/option, experience with it, general thoughts about the program/option? Its likely role in future of this plant? This region?

Recruitment and training process for these workers?

What program to bring them in?  
How long have you used the program?

Country of origin? Has this changed? Why?  
Length of stay?  
Stability of this labour force? Return workers? Why? How long?  
Male workers? Female workers?  
Where do they live? Hang out?  
How do they get to and from work – when they leave and return to their country of origin?  
On a daily basis?  
Who pays the costs of recruitment, travel, housing?

4) Where do you see workers in this industry in 5, 10, 20 years from now?

5) Can you tell about what this company does/doesn't do, and what it does locally?  
Processing  
Diving  
Net/Cage Maintenance

Construction  
Research/technical services  
Settings of moorings/anchors  
Trucking  
Therapeutant treatment  
Vet Services  
Seed Collection  
Waste Management  
Environmental Monitoring

### **Community**

1) For each of the plants that you have worked in, can you talk about its relationship to the adjacent/nearby communities from the point of view of economic development.

Source of processing employment?  
Other types of employment- fishing, construction, technical services, industry supplies- fish, processing equipment, rental costs for housing, etc.)?

2) Rough estimate of direct investment in the adjacent/nearby communities for each plant? Indirect investment? Direct local job creation? Indirect local job creation? Direct investment by the larger company? Indirect investment?

3) Has general relationship between seafood processing industry and economy of adjacent communities changed over time? Changed with development aquaculture? Similar or different aquaculture? Capture fisheries?

4) Have you noticed any changes to your (this) community while you have lived here?

Local demographics (age of population, origins, etc.)  
Size?  
Employment opportunities?  
Income?  
Crime rates?  
Services?  
Morale?

5) Talk in general terms about the changing contributions of the wild and aquaculture seafood processing industries to local communities? To the wider region? To New Brunswick?

6) Is there anything else you would like to add that you think is important to understanding changing labour forces and the relationship between seafood processing and community economic development in this region that I have not asked about?

**Thank you!**

## **Aquaculture and/or Seafood Processing Workers**

### Draft Interview Schedule

*Do you have any questions before we start?*

I would like to start with a few quick demographic questions I am asking all of my participants.

### **Work History**

1) Let's start with your employment history.

- Do you live close to where you work?
- Companies you have worked for?
- Communities where you have worked?
- Communities where you have lived?
- Jobs you have done over your career

2) Tell me about the plants you have worked in starting with the first plant and ending with this one.

- Aquaculture versus wild seafood processing
- Species processed?
- Final products?
- Seasonal versus year-'round work?
- Community where it was/is located?
- Your job(s) in each plant?
- How long you did each job and what it entailed?
- General changes in the plant when you worked there – seasonality, mechanization, labour force...

3) How did you end up in your current job (previous employment)?

- Friends/Family?
- Similar sector (ie wild fishery/aquaculture company/moved up in company)

4) What does your current job entail?

- Typical day? Responsibilities?
- Breaks?
- Any other jobs performed?
- Hours a day?
- Seasonal?
- How long have you worked here?
- What do you like about this job? What don't you like?
- Are you happy with how much you make?
- Has this changed at all?

Can you see yourself working in this job in five years? Ten? Explain.

5) How did you learn to do your job?

What was that experience like?

Did you have help, on your own?

Hard, easy?

6) Can you describe who you work with? Has this changed over time? How?

Manager/worker relationship

Worker/worker relationship

7) Would you encourage friends or family to work here?

Why/Why not?

Do you feel this work is interesting?

Secure?

8) How long does it take you to get to work? Does the company help with this?

Provide transportation or compensation?

*IF travelling a long distance:*

Does the company provide accommodation? (Free or ?)

How do you like the accommodations?

Were they adequate?

Would you change anything?

How is this for family/friends at home?

Can you tell me about your life before you commuted such a long distance, your life in your "Home" town versus your life here (in Canada, in NB)?

How do you imagine your future?

9) Do you work elsewhere or at any other times during the year?

Why?

Where?

10) Do you live anywhere else at any other times of the year?

Why?

Where?

11) Is there anything else about your past and/or current work that you would like to tell me about?

## **Community**

1) For each of the plants that you have worked in, can you talk about its relationship to

the adjacent/nearby communities from the point of view of economic development?

Source of processing employment?

Other types of employment- fishing, construction, technical services, industry supplies- fish, processing equipment, rental costs for housing, etc.)?

2) Can you guess about how much each plant you have worked for has contributed to investment in the adjacent/nearby communities? Direct local job creation? Indirect local job creation?

Direct investment by the larger company? Indirect investment?

3) Have you noticed the general relationship between the seafood processing industry and the economy of adjacent communities changed over time? Changed with development aquaculture? Similar or different aquaculture? Wild fisheries?

4) Talk in general terms about the changing contributions of the wild and aquaculture seafood processing industries to local communities? To the wider region? To New Brunswick?

5) Where do you do most of your shopping? Your co-workers?

6) Have you noticed any changes to your (this) community while you have lived here?

Local demographics (age of population, origins, etc.)

Size?

Employment opportunities?

Income?

Crime rates?

Services?

Morale?

7) Is there anything else you would like to add that you think is important to understanding changing labour forces and the relationship between seafood processing and community economic development in this region that I have not asked about?

8) Are there any beliefs and/or concerns you have about the industry, your workplace, of yourself, and your community before, during (and possibly after) working in the aquaculture industry/processing industry that we have not talked about and you would like to mention?

**Thank you!**

**Key Informant/Community Organization/ Local Business**  
Draft Interview Schedule

*Do you have any questions before we start?*

I would like to start with a few quick demographic questions I am asking all of my participants.

**Employment Information**

1) Can you tell me where you work, for how long and how it relates (if at all) to the aquaculture or wild seafood industry?

- Do you live close to your work?

2) Do you think that this business has been positively or negatively affected by the aquaculture industry? Capture Seafood industry?

How?

3) Talk in general terms about the changing contributions of the wild and aquaculture seafood processing industries to local communities? To the wider region? To New Brunswick?

4) Have you noticed any changes to the aquaculture/capture seafood workforce over the years? If so what? What do you think of the changes if any?

Mostly local?

Male/Female?

Young/Old?

**Community**

1) Can you talk about the relationship of seafood processing to the adjacent/nearby communities from the point of view of economic development.

Source of processing employment?

Other types of employment- fishing, construction, technical services, industry supplies- fish, processing equipment, rental costs for housing, etc.)?

2) Has general relationship between wild fishing industry and the economy of adjacent communities changed over time? Changed with development aquaculture? Similar or different aquaculture? To the wider region? To New Brunswick?

3) Have you noticed any changes to your (this) community while you have lived here?

Local demographics (age of population, origins, etc.)

Size?

Employment opportunities?

Income?

Crime rates?

Services?

Morale?

5) Is there anything else about your community that you think is important to discuss or mention?

6) Are there any beliefs and/or concerns you have about the industry and your community that you would like to discuss?

**Thank you!**