

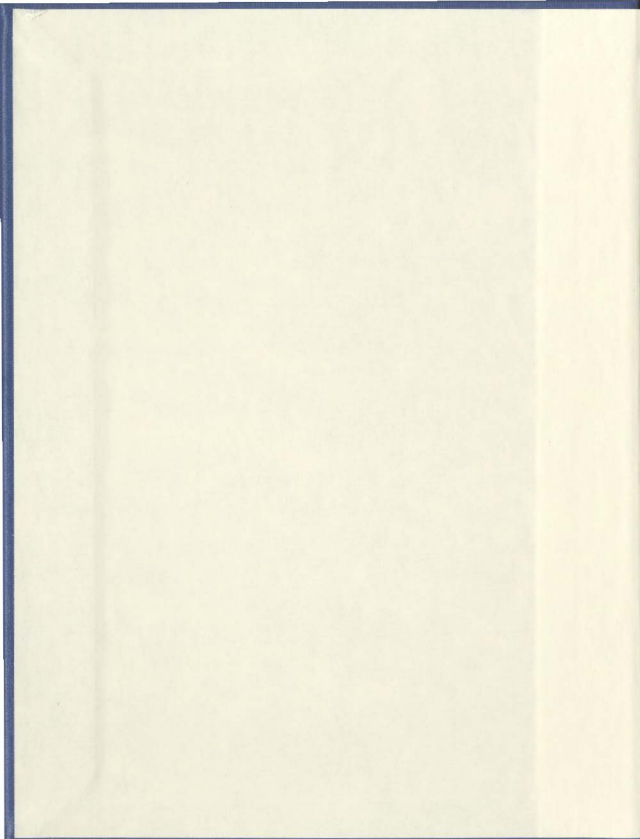
GENDER AND THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERY CRISIS:
A RE-EXAMINATION OF ADJUSTMENT

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**Gender and the Newfoundland Fishery Crisis:
A Re-examination of Adjustment**

by

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**A Major Report submitted to the
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Abstract

The purpose of this Major Report is to address the issue of gender in relation to the fishery crisis and two of the largest federal government adjustment programs (NCARP and TAGS) designed and implemented to meet the needs of those left unemployed in the fishing industry. The working hypothesis of this Major Report is that NCARP and TAGS neglected to meet adequately the needs of women working in the processing sector of the fishery due, in large part, to a lack of attention to previous research and experience on the part of those responsible for designing and implementing these adjustment programs.

One of the most important findings of this research is what it revealed about the lack of coordination of efforts of the federal and provincial government departments responsible for responding to the crisis. In particular, these programs have not adequately addressed the needs of women working in the processing sector of the fishery. Arguably, it is very much in the public interest that the failure of the adjustment programs and their differential impact on men and women be fully understood. It is one of the recommendations of this report that such research be carried out.

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Section 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this Major Report is to address the gender-specific implications of the fishery crisis and two of the resulting government adjustment programs (NCARP and TAGS) intended to meet the needs of those left unemployed in the fishing industry. This paper will try to assess how well the objectives of policy-makers met the expectations of clients. In addition, this study will attempt to bring together the diverse conclusions and findings of previously published evaluations of these programs. In doing so, this author will provide evidence to support the working hypothesis of this Major Report: that NCARP and TAGS neglected to meet adequately the needs of women working in the processing sector of the fishery primarily because of a lack of attention to previous research and experience on the part of those responsible for designing and implementing these adjustment programs.

The Northern Cod moratorium of 1992 caused the largest industrial displacement of labour in Canadian history, leaving in its wake widespread devastation of the Newfoundland economy (Savoie, 1994). It has been argued that the stock collapses which occurred in the late 1980s could be attributed to "too many people chasing too few fish." Under accusations of mismanagement, the federal government turned its attention to downsizing the fishing industry (Williams, 1996). NCARP and TAGS were charged with the task of meeting this objective.

The Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program (NCARP) and The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) are two of the largest adjustment programs ever employed by the federal government of Canada to provide emergency assistance and restructuring

options to those affected by the failure of the groundfishery. Billions of dollars were spent on these programs in the hope of reducing the human dependency on the groundfishery. The objective was to provide clients with the retraining necessary to obtain alternative employment outside of the industry. It has been estimated that between 1992 and 1994, 20-50,000 people were affected by the fishery closures. While both NCARP and TAGS successfully reduced the economic misfortune resulting from the groundfish moratoria, the overwhelming task of downsizing the labour force reduced the overall efficiency of these programs. NCARP (1992-94) included all fish harvesters, plant workers and trawlermen who were reliant on the Northern cod fishery¹ and/or had an historical dependency on the fishery for their livelihood (Government of Canada, 1992). NCARP attempted to remove one-third of fish harvesters and one-half of plant workers from the fishery.

TAGS (1994-98) was an Atlantic wide program and included clients from Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, P.E.I and Quebec. However, nearly 70 percent of all TAGS clients were from Newfoundland and Labrador (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1997). TAGS, more ambitiously than NCARP, aimed at removing one-half of the fishery labour force (Williams, 1996).

In the years prior to the moratorium the labour force in most fish plants around the province consisted of at least 50 percent women. When the TAGS program began in 1994, 35.3 percent of the clients were female². Despite this high proportion of females, neither NCARP nor TAGS were designed with a view to the needs of female processing

¹ That is fish harvesters, plant workers and trawlermen who demonstrated a dependence on the groundfishery in NAFO fishing areas 2J3KL.

workers. It has been argued that the federal government was caught off guard by the moratorium (Savoie, 1994). As a result, there was very little time to design a program which recognized gender-specific needs. This may hold true for NCARP. However, one year prior to the moratorium a study was commissioned by the Women's Policy Office of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to outline the effects of the fishery crisis on women working in the industry³. This document did call for programs which recognized the differential needs of women working in the fishery.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

The objective of this Major Report is to focus on two key questions. The first question is: did NCARP and TAGS meet the adjustment expectations of the participants in the groundfishery?

Indeed, this question merits investigation. The objectives of these programs were to downsize the fishery labour force and decrease the problem of *too many people chasing too few fish*. The final evaluation of TAGS (HRDC, 1998a) concluded that this goal was achieved. However, this does not appear to be the case. This report noted that over 12,000 TAGS clients were adjusted out of the groundfishery. Moreover, the report found with regards to these "adjusted" clients that "...they remain ready to shift back into groundfish if and when that fishery reopens" (HRDC, 1998a: iv). For a program for which the expectations of adjustment were high, results such as these are troubling. This

² see Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (1997)

³ see Rowe Consulting Economists (1991), hereafter referred to as Rowe (1991).

paper will attempt to demonstrate whether or not TAGS officials gave sufficient attention to previous research and experience before implementing this program.

The second research question is more narrow: did the NCARP and TAGS programs meet adequately the needs of women working in the processing sector specifically?

To answer this question the author will look at those adjustment program options which had the greatest impact on women. For the most part, many of the sources used in researching this paper identify the problems and inadequacies associated with the NCARP and TAGS programs. In general, this author is in agreement with much of this research. However, researching this topic uncovered additional evidence and sources which revealed aspects of these programs that had gender effects that were more positive (i.e. more favourable to women) than previously believed.

1.2 Methodology and Organization of the Study

In order to answer the first research question the author will make an evaluation of the NCARP and TAGS programs as presented in reports published by the federal government and independent reviewers. From this analysis it should become evident that the findings of the TAGS evaluation in 1998 were very similar to those of NCARP in 1994.

The second research question recognizes that the program options under NCARP and TAGS may not have been designed with a view to gender-specific needs. However, it is my purpose to view these program options from the perspective of their impact on

women working in the processing sector of the fishery. It will be demonstrated that the established criteria for certain options, such as program eligibility and early retirement, in combination with women's employment during the years prior to the moratorium (1989-91) had a differential impact on women. In the late 1980s, industry and government realized the groundfish stocks were in crisis. As a result of this decline in harvesting, many plants saw a decrease in production. For many women working in fish plants this meant fewer weeks of work and thus lower Employment Insurance (E.I.) payments (Rowe, 1991). The NCARP and TAGS programs based much of their criteria for eligibility, benefit rates, and early retirement on these key years.

The organization of this study is as follows. Section one introduces the research problem and presents the relevant background information.

Section two reviews the existing literature on gender and the fishery, and other studies germane to an assessment of the adjustment programs.

Women have always played an essential role in the Newfoundland fishery. Section three attempts to place the role of women in its proper historical and anthropological context.

Section four presents the fishery from a statistical perspective. Based primarily on Census data, this section examines the occupations of fish harvesters and processing workers in terms of education levels, income levels, age groups and gender. This section contains the necessary background for the analysis in the following sections.

Section five addresses the first research question outlined in the Statement of the Research Problem. The analysis will focus on several factors which may have had an

impact on the ability of NCARP and TAGS to meet the adjustment expectations of participants in the groundfishery.

Section six will address the second research question. The analysis will be limited to those program options which had the greatest impact on women working in the processing sector of the groundfishery.

It should be noted that this author did repeatedly attempt to make contact with officials at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans regarding NCARP. Unfortunately, although having explained that this was a research paper for a Master's degree and purely academic in nature, the principal players who were reached by phone would not agree to be cited or referred to, anonymously or otherwise in this report or to even so much as speak to this author off the record regarding these issues. However, the author was successful in discussing some of these issues with Mrs. Barbara Reid from the Department of Human Resources Development Canada. Several meetings with Mrs. Reid proved invaluable to my research.

The final section of this report presents the conclusions and recommendations of this study. This section explains why, in my opinion, the evidence points to a failure of the adjustment programs in their principal objective, particularly in regard to women. These comments may also offer some insight into how some of the manifest problems experienced during the past decade may be avoided, or at least mitigated should another natural resource crisis occur.

I find myself in agreement with some of the research outlining the cause of women. In addition, I can find a rationale for some of the policy responses of Government to this

crisis. However, neither side has managed to take a balanced perspective on this issue.

This paper endeavors to do just that.

Section 2.0 Literature Review

A good source to begin researching the differential impacts of the fishery crisis on women working in the processing sector is Rowe (1991) since, according to this report,

...there have been very few studies of the fishery which either directly address gender issues, or which even take account of gender differences. (Rowe, 1991:2)

The main objective of Rowe's report was to analyze the differential impact that current changes in the fishing industry were having on women. In addition, this report looked at the implications of this differential impact for government adjustment programs and diversification policies⁴.

The first and perhaps most important finding of this research was the lack of awareness and concern about the impact of the fishery crisis on women on behalf of those individuals and departments who were responsible for responding to it. Rowe discovered that many government departments simply could not relate to a request for information on women, and silence was a common response to inquiries. From an extensive list of respondents Rowe noted that when government leaders did respond to his questions "...they tended to argue that the programmes did not make distinctions between individuals" (Rowe, 1991:47). Rowe countered this argument by stating that this type of response missed the fact that "...occupational segregation and women's responsibility for

⁴ see also Williams (1996)

work in the home meant that they would be affected differently from men by the changes that occurred in the fishery” (Rowe, 1991:47).

The results of interviews with processing workers also confirmed that women were more likely to be working in ‘direct’ fish processing jobs such as trimming and packing⁵ while men had more employment options in fish processing such as maintenance, heavy equipment operation, and management. Furthermore, since men occupied these ‘indirect’ processing jobs Rowe felt that men would develop skills that were more easily transferable to occupations outside the fishery in the case of closures due to resource shortage. In order to ensure that women did not suffer more from the fishery crisis than men response programs should be designed so that they reflect women’s needs.

However, while Rowe (1991) specifically addresses the impact of the fishery crisis on women working in the industry, it is not the first report to deal with the issues surrounding the labour force participation of women. In the mid 1980s two background reports were completed for the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment. The first was written by Anger et al. (1986) and outlined several key points with respect to women and labour force participation. Women were found in occupations characterized predominantly by low wages, low status, and lack of opportunity for advancement. In terms of training, Anger et al. completed a review of the Canadian Jobs Strategy and found a high concentration of women in traditional female job areas such as home-making, child care worker, administrative assistant, and temporary office help. They noted that in

⁵ For a perspective on the health impacts of this type of work see Neis, B. and Williams, S. (1993).

1986 Newfoundland already had more women trained in office skills than the market demanded.

It is noteworthy that some of the research by Williams (1996) and HRDC (1996) suggested that under NCARP and TAGS women were being retrained for jobs in which there was already a labour surplus. Anger et al. had recommended that there was a need to answer important questions such as, which training areas provide the greatest likelihood of employment for women? What skills are becoming more in demand? Is it futile to encourage women to enter areas in which there is little opportunity for future employment?

The issue of the identification of prospective employment areas was investigated in 1993 by the provincial Department of Education and Employment and Immigration Canada. Prospects'93 is a document which provided NCARP counsellors with labour market prospects for occupations related to community college and private school course offerings in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Another important issue affecting the labour force participation of women is daycare. Anger et al. devote an entire chapter to daycare. The authors claim that because of women's "dual responsibility" for work in the home and outside the home, the availability of daycare is an important factor in determining women's level of participation in the labour force, in higher education, and in vocational training.

HRDC (1996) also deals with the issue of daycare. In this report many of the problems TAGS clients faced with the availability of the child care allowance are discussed. Child care allowances were not available if the caregiver and the child were

members of the same household. It is argued that this rule assumed that the caregiver was the other parent. However, this was not always the case and in some households the caregiver was a grandparent or other relative who, many informants felt, should be paid for their child care services. This was a major issue for single parents who were more likely to find themselves in such circumstances.

The second background report completed for the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment was written by Dr. Linda Kealey (1986) entitled Factors Affecting Women's Labour Force Participation. The report outlined several key barriers to women and labour force participation. For example, Kealey noted that "...the sexual division of labour with its emphasis on women's primary domestic responsibilities has also been, and remains, a major structural barrier for women" (Kealey, 1986:31). In addition, Kealey argued that women's domestic responsibilities played a large part in reinforcing inequalities in the labour force and that sex-role stereotypes encouraged women to pursue only a limited variety of educational options. She recommended that one possible solution would be to encourage women to enter non-traditional programs.

The reports by Anger et al. (1986) and Kealey (1986) demonstrate that the differences between the labour force participation of men and women have been recognized in the past. In addition, women's responsibilities in the home mean that they will be limited in the variety of occupations they can pursue and are perhaps more vulnerable to unemployment caused by unstable industries. As a result, women require

alternative options and guidance which recognizes their different needs when it comes to retraining and education⁶.

In 1994, a report was completed by the Women's Committee of the Fish, Food and Allied Worker's Union (FFAW) entitled Consultations with Women in the Newfoundland Fishery. Approximately 1000 women in more than 20 communities around Newfoundland and Labrador participated in the consultations. These discussions provided women with an opportunity to voice their concerns with regards to their training needs under NCARP. These consultations raised many important issues such as the fear of returning to the school setting, getting accurate information from NCARP counsellors and low self-esteem (Women's Committee of FFAW, 1994).

A similar report was prepared in 1995 by Roberts and Robbins. Gathering Voices explored the impact of the fishery crisis on women working in the industry and helped these women identify alternative opportunities for themselves and their communities. The authors found that "lack of awareness, lack of information and lack of self-confidence were very real blocks that prevented these women from taking a more active role in community/economic development" (Roberts J. and N. Robbins, 1995: 2).

Like Rowe (1991), Robinson (1995) is a research paper which specifically focuses on the impact of the fishery crisis on women in Newfoundland and Labrador. In this paper Robinson attempted to answer the question: "How is it that women who are highly productive, industrial wage labourers suddenly become unemployed, unskilled, and in need of being made over?" (Robinson, 1995: 163). She concluded that there was a great deal

⁶ see Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (1985)

of dissatisfaction about adjustment programs among female plant workers. Robinson argued that women have been ignored in the design process of these programs and their skills have not been recognized. Furthermore, Robinson asked some interesting questions regarding the treatment of women under government adjustment programs such as "...do those responsible for adjustment policies in the fishery recognize women's particular needs and their diversity? How do they help, hinder, or otherwise affect women's chances of finding another job?" (Robinson, 1995: 164).

Williams (1996) is a report which provides an examination of the impact of the fishery crisis on women working in the industry in Newfoundland and Labrador. Discussions in this paper range from the historical role of women in the fishery to the participation of women in NCARP and TAGS. Indeed, much of the research contained in this report was carried out by FishNet members in an effort to bring attention to the situation of women in the fishery. FishNet⁷ was formed in 1994 and consists of representatives from the fishery unions, women's organizations, government and community agencies and researchers (Williams, 1996).

Several important studies, reports, and evaluations have been completed on NCARP and TAGS. In some cases these documents are internal reports⁸ by federal government departments such as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). In other cases, independent researchers have been called upon to review these programs. An

⁷ The goal of FishNet and its members is to make the concerns of women in the fishery known to decision-makers and to the public.

⁸ I was informed by an anonymous source at DFO that these reports exist but the documents themselves have not been made available to me.

example is the 1994 report prepared by Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists Ltd. entitled Final Evaluation of the Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program. This report was sponsored by the DFO and its objective was to evaluate the components of NCARP administered by the DFO to determine the degree to which the program had met its objectives. It should be noted that the analysis did not take a gender focus.

The evaluation concluded that the Income Replacement Component of the program did conform with its terms and conditions. In terms of adjustment, NCARP could only directly reduce dependency on the northern cod fishery in two ways: fixed gear groundfish licence retirement and early retirement. However, indirectly NCARP could encourage people to leave the fishery by providing them with training to acquire skills for work outside of the fishery. The report concluded that this training was hindered by two barriers: the advanced age of the fishery workforce (53 percent 40 years of age or older), and their low levels of formal education (68 percent had not graduated from high school). Thus, a great deal of the training had to be focused on basic literacy and numeracy, as well as academic upgrading instead of job specific skills.

This was not the only evaluation report completed on NCARP. Also in 1994, Savoie reviewed the NCARP training efforts. Savoie (1994) focused on the “lessons learned” from NCARP. However, Savoie does not consider gender issues explicitly.

Savoie’s report drew twelve principal conclusions. For the present purpose, the most relevant are: first, that adjustment (whether at the individual or community level) takes time. It has been known for some time that there is no quick fix to the problems in the groundfish industry. Second, governments must let the target group know that over

half of those currently employed in the groundfish industry will no longer be employed even when the cod stocks have recovered. Third, the “turf battles” which occurred between different departments and different levels of government during the implementation of NCARP must stop if the groundfishery is to renew itself in a constructive manner.

A study of gender and the fishery crisis sponsored by the Department of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC, 1996) was to provide a better understanding of household responses to the fishery crisis and to TAGS, and to analyze the differential impacts on women and men. Much of the data from HRDC (1996) was gathered in 1995 and included a review of the existing literature, interviews with informants knowledgeable about TAGS, secondary data analysis and case studies in five communities (HRDC, 1996). The report lists several important findings. It was argued that most families have a division of household labour where the women do all or most of the unpaid domestic work and child care and men do the ‘outside’ work for pay. Thus, given this traditional division of labour responsibilities, women face additional challenges in adjusting to the groundfish shutdown. It was argued that women need more support to help them deal with family responsibilities while they complete training. Furthermore, there were elements of the program that placed women at a disadvantage. For example, the failure to designate plants that would be part of the fishery of the future was a major obstacle for women. In addition, training programs were not made accessible for women who were more restricted in their ability to relocate for training.

The final source to be addressed in this section was completed by the Department of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) in 1998. There were three evaluation issues addressed by the TAGS/HRDC report including: the effectiveness and adjustment impacts of counselling and training programs, employment support and local economic development programs, and finally the adjustment impacts of income support.

The report concluded that the TAGS/HRDC client population presented "enormous and unique" adjustment challenges. For example, low levels of education, older age profiles, and living in areas characterized by high unemployment rates⁹. In addition, it was found that for the majority of TAGS clients, permanent adjustment outside of the groundfish industry could not be accomplished within the resources and time-span of TAGS.

Second, HRDC found that adjustment was 'a household process.' In other words, many TAGS clients had to take into consideration family circumstances before making decisions regarding their future adjustment needs. Moreover, in their survey research it was women who expressed more positive views towards adjustment and who had higher levels of formal education than men. However, women were found to be more constrained by family and community ties and by cultural values.

Third, HRDC noted that education was a critical factor in successful adjustment. It was discovered that clients with higher levels of education and training were more likely to have adjusted out of the fishery.

⁹ These findings were identical to those reported in Gardner Pinfold (1994) and Savoie (1994). This evidence points to a lack of attention to previous research and experience by TAGS officials

Finally, HRDC concluded that the overall adjustment target for the TAGS program was being reached. However, out of the 12,127 TAGS clients who adjusted out of the groundfish industry at the end of 1996 only 1,040 clients were working outside the fishery. Interestingly, HRDC noted that if and when the groundfishery returns the persistent problem of an excess labour supply will once again plague the industry.

2.1 Summary

From the sources presented in this section it is apparent that the fishery crisis has had a differential impact on women working in the industry. Indeed, much of the research which predated the moratorium of 1992 appears to have recognized this fact and made the call for government programs which acknowledge the needs of both genders.

Furthermore, from the evaluation reports of NCARP and TAGS it is evident that the process of adjustment was difficult and adversely affected by an aging, poorly educated fishery labour force. It is important to note that no previous study has undertaken a comparative analysis of the evaluation reports of NCARP and TAGS to establish the similar weaknesses in both of these programs.

Several authors have discussed the consequences of the gender division of labour which exists in most Newfoundland households. Since women have always played an integral role in the groundfishery, it is important to place the historical gender division of labour in the Newfoundland fishery in its proper anthropological context. The next section is devoted to this objective.

Section 3.0 The Historical Gender Division of Labour in the Fishery

3.1 Overview

Throughout its history, the traditional inshore fishery has maintained a *de facto* gender division of labour. Men performed the dangerous task of fishing, while the women took charge of the shore work. The work-related tasks of both men and women were very different, however, they were equally important to the proper functioning of the family as a whole.

Operating a trap fishing enterprise was very labour intensive and, as a result, it was helpful to have a large network of kinship ties to operate efficiently. This fishery was often referred to as “trap fishing” because the men used a piece of gear called a cod trap to catch the fish. Fishing with a cod trap usually consisted of about five or six men. In many cases, these men were related in some way (Faris, 1973). Due to the large amount of fish that was caught, the men depended on the women to take responsibility for the operation on shore. While it was not their only responsibility, the women were expected to cure and dry the entire catch during the height of the summer trap fishery.

With advancements in industrial technology in the mid to late 1950s, the small family fishing enterprise came to an end. Fishermen could sell their catch to the large processing plants for cash instead of selling it to the local merchant and, as a result, women’s work on the flakes disappeared. These women soon became a source of inexpensive and experienced labour for the large processors (Antler, 1977).

While the labours of women involved in the fishery may not be carried out on the flakes today, they are still an essential and recognizable part of the processing sector. This

section outlines the evolutionary pattern of the gender division of labour in the fishery. It is argued that while the gender division of labour that existed in the inshore fishing crew may be gone, it has reappeared in the modern processing plants of today.

3.2 The Role of Men in the Fishery

During the days of the traditional inshore fishery it was the men who maintained the responsibility for harvesting. The trap crew would, for the most part, follow a typical development cycle. According to Faris (1973), a father would fish with his sons and he held the estate including all of the fishing gear. Upon the father's retirement or death the sons would inherit equal portions of his property but would continue to fish together since each portion of gear was necessary to make a complete fishing enterprise. Sons would then marry and build houses in the same garden and would eventually accumulate gear of their own. By the time their sons were old enough and ready to fish, each brother would take an equal share of the gear and form a new fishing crew with his sons. If a father did not have many sons the crew might consist of a shareman, that is, an individual from a neighboring community who participated in the trap fishing voyage. 'Hard' boys could also be included in a trap crew. Hard boys were post-adolescents who left the boats at the end of the trap voyage to return to school.

Fishing was most intense during the summer months. During this time, the men might be fishing every day, hauling thousands of pounds of fish per day (Williams, 1996). However, fishing was not the only responsibility of the men. They would also do their share of the gardening, usually the digging, which required a great deal of strength.

(Porter, 1985). In the fall, the men would help with the harvesting and lift the heavy bags of vegetables into the cellar (Williams, 1996).

In the winter, usually after the first snowfall, the men would begin harvesting wood. This work usually started in early November and lasted, intermittently, until April. In order to haul wood it was necessary for the bogs and ponds to be frozen enough to support the weight of a horse and slide (Faris, 1973). At times, if the fishing season had been poor, a man would spend the winter working in the lumber camps. However, this was not the preferred method of supplementing one's income since the pulp and paper companies were seen as "merciless exploiters," and it was almost impossible to earn much income. Instead, the men of the north east coast preferred the gamble and danger of the seal fishery to supplement their incomes during a year when the fishing had been poor (Faris, 1973).

Besides hauling wood for fuel, winter was also a time for the men to repair parts of the gear which may have been damaged during the previous fishing season. In addition, a man may take time to hunt, for food, and skins. Some men were involved in the fur trade when the prices were favourable.

3.3 The Role of Women in the Fishery

While the men were responsible for the work at sea, it was the women who controlled the work on shore. Women were responsible for a wide variety of household activities. It has been argued that the main task of a woman was making sure that her family was healthy and well fed. This included the care of livestock such as cows, sheep,

goats, chickens, or horses. This was a time consuming chore as the animals needed adequate amounts of hay, roots, and water, especially during the winter months. Women also knew folk remedies, which they used to cure common ailments. The real medical skills, however, were found among those few women who were also practicing midwives (Porter, 1985).

Gardening was another duty of women. They cleared the ground of rocks, planted, weeded, harvested, and defended the garden against intruding animals (Porter, 1985). Some women were known to grow their own seed. Murray (1979) noted that in Elliston, a woman was considered lazy if she did not grow her own seed.

Berrypicking was an activity which often included the entire family. Families would often make a day of going out to the barrens to pick a variety of berries (Porter 1985; and Murray 1979). Berrypicking provided a significant cash contribution to the family income. Women would sell the berries and often use the "berry money" to purchase winter supplies. It was common for a woman to accept responsibility for the family finances. Generally, if a man worked outside of the community, for example in the lumber camps, he would almost always pass the money to his wife.

Cooking was a chore that was the sole responsibility of the women. This was often a time consuming task, especially at the height of the summer trap fishery. During the winter, most families had four meals per day, however, in the summer this number rose to at least seven or eight (Porter, 1985). One should mention as well bread-making, a chore in which most women took great pride. Women with relatively small families baked at least once per day, however, larger families required two bakings (Antler, 1977).

From this list of work-related tasks and responsibilities it is obvious that women played an essential role in the survival of their families. These women worked tirelessly to complete work and responsibilities that appear impossible to those of us who read about them. However, what made these women remarkable was that, as Porter indicated, within this busy schedule of chores they found the time to work on the flakes. The real boundary between the worlds of men and women was the “shoreline or landwash.” The work on the flakes became an area in which women developed tremendous skills and expertise.

The authority on the flakes was the skipper’s wife, who was often referred to as the “skipper of the shore crew.” She was essentially in charge of the whole process, which included the hiring and supervision of labour. The fish was processed along an assembly line. The “cutthroat” began the operation, the “header” removed the head and guts, and the “splitter” removed the backbone. The fish was then washed and salted. Finally, it was carried to the flakes to be stacked and dried. This may appear to be a relatively simple operation, however, it was a process which called for exact timing and experience. The fish had to have the proper amount of salt, they could not be stacked too high, and one needed to be consistent in predicting the weather since rain and moisture would spoil the fish. When the weather was bad the children would be called upon to help cover or put away the fish, which could prove to be a time consuming task in itself (Porter, 1985).

3.4 The End of Work on the Flakes

Antler (1977) has argued that the inshore fishery has been eroding since Newfoundland and Labrador became the tenth province of Canada in 1949. The end of World War II brought advancements in marine technology such as sonar, and larger vessels capable of exploring the high seas. Starting with the liberal government of J.R. Smallwood, successive governments have since promoted "industrialization." According to Antler (1977:109):

...the Newfoundland government and important segments of her ruling class saw Newfoundland's future in terms of major industrialization which required a free, dependable and inexpensive wage labour force.

Large processing firms were interested in a completely industrialized fishery. Household production, which characterized the inshore fishery was contrary to these interests. The small inshore fishery provided an alternative to wage labour and "raised the rate of wages necessary to tempt workers into the industrial sphere" (Antler, 1977:110).

As a result, between 1957 and 1965 there was a united effort on the part of the provincial government and large processing companies to bring an end to the inshore fishery. This united effort was manifested in the form of resettlement programs which were designed to "remove fishery families from small fishing villages to centres where employment was available with offshore or midshore fleets or in other sectors of the industrial economy" (Antler, 1977:110).

The work of women in the fishery has been transferred from the flakes to the fish plants. The wages of fish plant workers were "low and the work far from pleasant." Thus, it is unlikely that wage labour opportunities drew women to the processing sector. It is more likely that women became available for plant work because their labour could not be applied to the inshore fishery (Antler, 1977). In addition, by hiring women, the processing plants received a relatively inexpensive source of experienced labour.

The gender division of labour still exists in the modern processing sector¹⁰. Jobs such as trimmers and packers are mainly occupied by women (Rowe 1991; and Williams 1996). Men, on the other hand, occupy jobs such as maintenance, heavy equipment operation, and management/supervisory positions. It has been argued that this gender division of labour leaves women at a disadvantage in times of resource crisis, such as that experienced in 1992¹¹.

Women now make up at least half of the processing labour force (Williams, 1996). Fish plant workers in general are still paid relatively low wages. According to Alastair O'Rielly, president of the Fisheries Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (FANL), fish plant workers can barely survive on their current earnings. FANL realizes that they are dealing with an aging work force and the problem is exacerbated by the fact that the younger generation do not see a future in processing¹².

¹⁰ see also McCay (1995) Fish Guts, Hair Nets and Unemployment Stamps: Women and Work in Co-operative Fish Plants.

¹¹ see also Jentoft (1993) for a perspective on the fishery crisis which occurred in Norway.

¹² personal communication, 23 March 2000

3.5 Summary

From the traditional inshore fishing enterprise to the modern industrial fishery, there has always been a gender division of labour in the fishery of Newfoundland and Labrador. The realms of man and woman divided at the shoreline: the men were responsible for the tasks on the sea, while the women were responsible for the jobs on shore.

With industrialization and resettlement, the traditional inshore fishery became insignificant and the large processing operations soon dominated the industry. Women found their way into this "new" fishery because of their extensive experience from the inshore fishery. Plant owners received experienced labour at a low price.

In the industrial fishery the gender division of labour continues. Men are typically found in the indirect processing jobs, while women remain in the labour intensive jobs of cutting, trimming, and packing. Although the fishery has changed with regards to technology and industrialization, the role and labours of women in the new industrial fishery are much the same as they were in the small inshore fishery of years gone by.

This continuity is also evident from census data. The next section illustrates the importance of these data for purposes of understanding and developing socio-economic fisheries policy.

Section 4.0 An Analysis of Gender in the Newfoundland Fishery: A Statistical Perspective

4.1 Overview

The problems of unemployment caused by the fishery crisis in Atlantic Canada presented a number of serious challenges to the designers of the adjustment programs intended to alleviate these problems and at the same time lay the groundwork for the “new fishery.” The evaluation reports of NCARP and its successor TAGS undertaken by the DFO, HRDC¹³, and independent reviewers identified numerous barriers to adjustment which have prevented these two programs from attaining success. There is no doubt as to the seriousness of these findings, no question of the challenges which they posed to government officials unprepared for a fishery crisis of an unprecedented magnitude in the Canadian experience. Indeed, trying to adjust an industry composed mainly of middle aged individuals lacking a formal education and alternative sources of employment is quite difficult. The task becomes even more challenging when one combines this with the objective of attempting to provide each individual with income support.

TAGS, in essence, was an extension of NCARP. As a result, one would think that the officials charged with the task of implementing TAGS would have been keenly aware of the challenges faced by NCARP clients and thus in a position to eliminate, or at least mitigate effectively, the barriers identified in the evaluation of NCARP. A review of the evidence does not support this supposition. It is quite possible that different officials were called upon to implement TAGS. In any event, one would expect that the officials

¹³ As described in section 2.0

responsible for developing and implementing TAGS would have been made aware of the challenges and short-comings of its predecessor, NCARP. Surprisingly, this does not seem to have been the case. This is disconcerting in view of the initial program objective to remove 50 percent of the fishery labour force from the industry¹⁴. Moreover, the fact that several of the conclusions recorded by HRDC (1998a) were very similar to those of Savoie (1994) and Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists (1994) raises the question of what went wrong. What prevented TAGS officials from anticipating these problems? Why did officials discover the same characteristics about essentially the same client population as in 1994 and then label them as “unique findings” only in 1998?

In researching the present paper this author requested statistical information describing education levels, income levels, and age groups of NCARP clients from the DFO. I was informed by an anonymous source that it was not possible to get access to this information “because the databases at the DFO had changed.” However, individuals at the DFO did inform me that the figures relating to the NCARP clientele were essentially identical to those of TAGS. The only difference being that there were more TAGS clients.

This section will present to the reader a statistical description of the fishing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador before and after the moratorium based on Statistics Canada data. The purpose of this section is to give the reader an appreciation of what can be gleaned from census data that would have been readily available to decision-

¹⁴ However, this adjustment target changed over the life of TAGS. See Section 5.0, page 48 for further explanation.

makers at the time. In particular, it will describe important characteristics of the Newfoundland fishery labour force such as education and income levels, as well as occupational divisions by gender and average age. In some cases the occupational categories of the census data vary from year to year¹⁵.

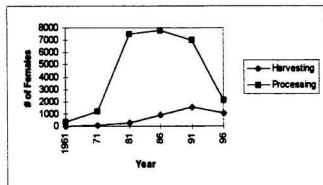
The evidence suggests that many of the conclusions and findings outlined in HRDC (1998a), Savoie (1994), and Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists (1994) could have been anticipated well in advance of the groundfish moratorium in 1992. Why they were not is an open question. The discussion in section five attempts to provide a tentative answer.

4.2 Participation in the Fishery by Gender 1961-96

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 present to the reader a graphical representation of the Newfoundland fishery labour force by occupation and gender from 1961 to 1996. Figure 4.1 illustrates that female participation in the processing sector underwent a dramatic expansion during the 1970s that lasted until the 1990s. By 1996, female participation (processing) had dropped back to the level of the 1970s.

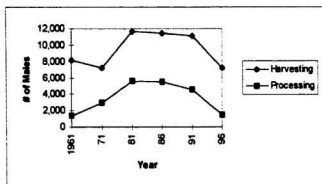
By contrast, the expansion affected males in the processing sector (Figure 4.2) as well but to a much lesser degree. In terms of harvesting, the expansion affected males more than females, not surprisingly.

¹⁵ In this paper, processing workers will be referred to as "fish plant workers" and fishermen/women will be referred to as "fish harvesters."



Source: Statistics Canada Census data

Figure 4.1: Number of Females Working in the Fishery 1961-96



Source: Statistics Canada Census data

Figure 4.2: Number of Males Working in the Fishery 1961-96

4.3 Analysis of Fishery Labour Force Characteristics

4.3.1 Education

Data on the educational attainment levels of fishery workers in Newfoundland and Labrador are available in the census reports dating back to 1961. From Tables 4.1 and 4.2 one can clearly see a trend of poorly educated fishery workers evolving in the industry. In

the years before the moratorium, the numbers of individuals with less than a grade nine education compared to those with post secondary training is staggering. In 1961, 83 percent of fishermen had less than a grade nine education, not one had any post secondary education. In the same year, 75 percent of male fish plant workers had less than a grade nine education, only one male had a university degree. The numbers have not changed significantly by 1971 when 78 percent of fishermen reported having less than grade nine, and less than one percent reported having a university degree.

In 1971 and 1981 some interesting statistics emerge. From the data, it appears that the educational attainment levels of women rise significantly to the point where the ratio of men to women with a university degree is 1:1.

In the post-moratorium period, education became one of the focal points of NCARP and TAGS. Interestingly, given the overall level of education among the fishery labour force before the moratorium, one of the main conclusions by HRDC (1998a) was that the TAGS client population had "relatively low levels of formal education (72% with less than high school completed)." This was understood by HRDC officials to be a significant barrier to education and retraining. A similar finding was recorded by Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists in 1994, who noted that training under NCARP was hindered by low levels of formal education among the fishery labour force (68 percent had not graduated from high school). This is a fact that should have been quite obvious from the census data long before the moratorium. Nonetheless, Tables 4.1 and 4.2 demonstrate that there have been improvements in the education levels of fishery workers over time. The greatest improvement occurring in the 'less than grade nine category.' However,

these trends were evident before 1992. Thus, it is doubtful how much of this improvement is due to the efforts of NCARP and TAGS¹⁶.

Table 4.3 suggests that TAGS may have contributed to improving the educational backgrounds of its clients. The greatest improvement occurring in the category 'some secondary' education. However, it should be noted that while TAGS appears to have helped a significant number of its clients attain at least some secondary education, if not a high school diploma, there was no significant improvement in the numbers of TAGS clients receiving a post secondary diploma or a university degree. This is not surprising given the historically low levels of education among those working in the fishing industry. While the improvements in secondary schooling certainly enhanced the confidence of fishery workers in the classroom, it did little to adjust workers out of the fishery.

¹⁶ In order to attribute improvements in educational attainment to NCARP and TAGS one must decide whether or not there was an improvement in the rate of increase in educational attainment over time in the post-moratorium period.

Table 4.1: Proportion of the Newfoundland Fishery Labour Force by Highest Level of Schooling* for Fish Plant Workers (in percent).

Gender & Year	Highest Grade Attended				
	Less than grade 9	Grade 9-13, no diploma	Grade 9-13, with diploma	Some University	University Degree
1961					
Males	75.3	23	1.5	-	0.072
Females	66	33	1.4	-	-
1971					
Males	64.5	25	9.2	1.3	0.17
Females	75	17	6	1.4	1.4
1981					
Males	48	32	14	5.6	0.099
Females	41	41	15	3.4	0.071
1996**	32	44	16	5.8	1.5

* Source: Data adapted from Statistics Canada, Census 1961, 1971, 1981, 1996.

** Data not available by gender for 1996.

Table 4.2: Proportion of the Newfoundland Fishery Labour Force by Highest Level of Schooling* for Fish Harvesters (in percent).

Gender & Year	Less than grade 9	Highest Grade Attended		Some University	University Degree
		Grade 9-13, no diploma	Grade 9-13, with diploma		
1961					
Males	83	15	1.1	-	-
Females	69	25	6	-	-
1971					
Males	78	17	3.6	0.97	0.07
Females	72	24	2.6	1.6	0.24
1981					
Males	59	26	9.5	4.7	0.23
Females	45	40	13	1.6	-
1996**	37.5	42	14	5.6	1.9

*Source: Data adapted from Statistics Canada, Census 1961, 1971, 1981, 1996.

** Data not available by gender for 1996.

Table 4.3*: Educational Attainment Levels of TAGS Clients before and after TAGS-Sponsored Education and Training Programs, 1994-97.**

	Upon Entry to TAGS		Following Completion of TAGS Training (July'97)	
	%	Cumulative %	%	Cumulative %
Educational Attainment				
University Degree	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Postsecondary Diploma	1.8	2.0	4.3	4.5
Postsecondary Certificate	7.7	9.7	12.0	16.5
Some Postsecondary	1.0	10.7	5.4	21.9
High School Completion	19.2	29.9	15.5	37.4
Some Secondary	29.0	58.9	25.9	63.3
0-8 Years	41.1	100	36.7	100

* Source: Anon. (1998).

** Data not available by gender.

4.3.2 Income¹⁷

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 show the average employment income for fish plant workers and fish harvesters from 1961 to 1996. It is clear that female fish plant workers have significantly lower incomes than their male counterparts. Consider this in the context of Table 4.4 which shows the number of weeks worked in each of these reference groups: fish harvesting occupations, fish plant workers, and foremen/women in food, beverage and related processing occupations. Under the heading "1-26 weeks mostly full time" women predominate in the occupational categories of fish harvesters and fish plant workers. As the number of weeks worked in 1985 increases, the number of women working in the industry decreases. This evidence lends support to the argument that women were more likely to receive lower benefit rates under both NCARP and TAGS because they worked fewer weeks before the moratorium and, as a result, received lower Employment Insurance (E.I.) payments than their male counterparts (Williams, 1996).

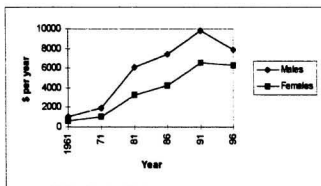
Furthermore, Table 4.4 also lends support to Rowe's (1991) arguments that women were relegated to the direct processing jobs such as cutting, trimming and packing in the plants and, as a result, were more vulnerable to the effects of catch failure and resource shortage than were men. From the occupational category, "foremen/women in food, beverage and related processing occupations" note that there were no reported forewomen in any processing industry in Newfoundland in 1985.

From 1991 to 1996 the income of female plant workers remains relatively stable at approximately \$6000 per year (Figure 4.3). However, the income of male fish plant

¹⁷ All income data are reported in current dollars.

workers declines considerably during the post-moratorium period, falling from a high of \$10,000 to approximately \$7,800 per year. Due to a more dominant presence of males in the fishery in terms of hours worked, it may be argued that men were affected more directly (and women more indirectly) by the moratorium. Hence, the wages of men would have been affected relatively more than those of women.

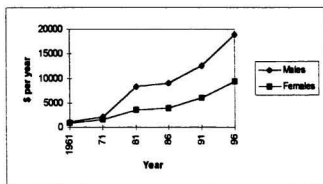
Figure 4.4 presents the income data for fish harvesting. During the period 1991 to 1996 the income of female fish harvesters increases slightly from about \$5000 to \$9000 per year. The greatest increase in income however is evident in the income levels of male fish harvesters. Their incomes increased to about \$19,000 from \$11,000 during the same period¹⁸.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census data

Figure 4.3: Average Income by Gender for Fish Plant Workers 1961-96

¹⁸ This increase can perhaps be explained by booming snow crab and shrimp stocks in the mid-1990s.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census data

Figure 4.4: Average Income by Gender for Fish Harvesters 1961-96

Table 4.4*: Persons 15 Years and Over Who Worked Since January 1, 1985 by Detailed Occupation and Gender, Showing Weeks Worked in 1985, Mostly Full Time, for Newfoundland, 1986 Census.

Occupation	Worked in 1985					
	1-26 weeks Mostly full time		27-48 weeks Mostly full time		49-52 weeks Mostly full time	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Fishing harvesting occupations	9,325	735	1,770	20	515	5
Fish Plant Workers	2,295	3,280	985	675	360	165
Foremen/women: food, beverage & related processing occupations	170	--	115	--	225	--

* Source: Statistics Canada.

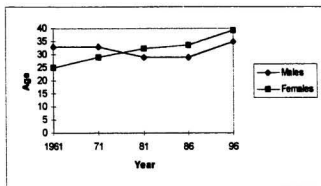
4.3.3 Age Groups

Figures 4.5 and 4.6 describe the average age of fish plant workers and fish harvesters. Evidently, the average age of female fish plant workers increased steadily from 1961 to 1986 while the average age of male fish plant workers remained relatively stable at approximately 33 years of age for the same period.

For fish harvesters, males maintained a slightly higher average age than females from 1961 to 1981. However, in 1986 the average age for males and females is about the same.

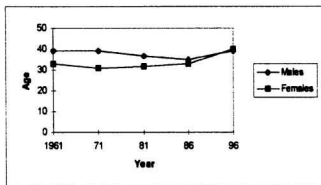
Given this age data, HRDC (1998a) indicated that one of the “enormous and unique adjustment challenges” faced by TAGS clients was that 49 percent were 40 years of age or older. But this was pointed out four years earlier by Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists (1994) who reported that training under NCARP was hindered by the advanced age of the fishery labour force (53 percent 40 years of age or older). This demographic characteristic is also apparent from the census data. Figures 4.5 and 4.6 demonstrate that while the average ages of male fish harvesters and fish plant workers were both decreasing, the average age of female fish plant workers was in fact increasing. From 1961 to 1996 the average age of females increased from 25 to 39.2 years. This evidence is important when one considers that many female fish plant workers were ineligible for the early retirement program under TAGS because they did not reach the age of eligibility (55 years of age). However, many of these women began working in fish plants at a very early age. As a result, many had accumulated a lifetime of work experience, some as early as 45 years of age. Arguably, more emphasis should have been

placed on years of work experience rather than on the age requirement for early retirement.



Source: Statistics Canada, Census data

Figure 4.5: Average Age of Fish Plant Workers by Gender 1961-96



Source: Statistics Canada Census data¹⁹

Figure 4.6: Average Age of Fish Harvesters by Gender 1961-96

¹⁹ 1991 Census data N/A.

4.4 Summary

Savoie argued that the government was “caught off guard” by the moratorium of 1992. In any event, given the availability of census data, one could argue that the government should not have been surprised by the barriers to adjustment which adversely affected NCARP and TAGS clients. In fact, there does not appear to be any reason why the HRDC (1998a) final evaluation report for TAGS should document as a “unique” finding the fact that more than seventy percent of fishery workers had less than a grade nine education.

Furthermore, some basic research would have pointed to the steadily increasing average age of female fish plant workers. All else being the same, an analysis of these data would have suggested to officials the need to establish early retirement eligibility criteria which more adequately recognized the circumstances of women working in the processing sector.

Answers to questions such as “what went wrong and what prevented officials from anticipating these problems?” are difficult to answer. The next section will attempt to provide a tentative answer to the first research question outlined in Section one: did NCARP and TAGS meet the adjustment expectations of the participants in the groundfishery? This section will present a comparative analysis of the different evaluation reports of NCARP and TAGS. This exercise demonstrates how a lack of attention to previous research by government officials led to the many problems faced by these two programs.

Section 5.0 NCARP & TAGS: Meeting the Adjustment Expectations of Participants in the Groundfishery

5.1 The Reality of Adjustment

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 present to the reader the figures describing those individuals who exited the fishery under NCARP and TAGS by occupation and gender. The data relating to the overall totals contained in these tables came from Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists (1994) and HRDC (1998a). However, the data in these reports were not separated into male and female categories. As a result, the author derived the estimates of males and females in both tables using 1991 Census data (Fishery Labour Force by Occupation and Gender). Table 5.1 contains the data relating to NCARP. It is clear that the majority of the adjusted clientele was made up of those who took the early retirement options. Not surprisingly, fewer females than males are represented in the fish harvester category, while in the plant worker category we see a larger proportion of females.

Table 5.2 contains the data representing those who adjusted out of the fishery under TAGS. The data presented in this table are more interesting than those in Table 5.1. For example, those who took the early retirement and training for work outside the fishery options made up a small proportion of the adjusted clientele. However, the adjustment target of 12,000 clients is made up mostly of those clients who trained for work in other sectors of the fishery.

In Table 5.2 we see similar trends with respect to gender divisions in both occupational categories as in Table 5.1. As expected, there are fewer female fish harvesters than males and females outnumber males in the processing category.

Government officials did meet their adjustment target. Over the life of TAGS, several changes were made with respect to this target number. By the end of 1996, the adjustment target had been reduced from removing 50 percent of the fishery labour force from the industry to an estimated 12,000 clients. In fact, approximately 12,000 clients were removed from the groundfishery. However, the employment burden on the fishing industry in general still exists. It appears that officials have pushed this problem into the future and placed the burden of excess employment on other species in order to meet their adjustment objective for TAGS.

In the mid 1990s, the Newfoundland fishery experienced an increase in the abundance of snow crab and shrimp stocks. Steady increases in quota allocations for these lucrative species have since occurred. Arguably, this was the source of salvation for the Newfoundland fishery. In fact, the booming shellfish industry was a source of employment for many fish harvesters and plant workers who were eligible for TAGS (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1997).

Moreover, TAGS officials noted, with regards to those who met the adjustment out criteria on the basis of training for work in other sectors of the fishery that,

...the great majority of those who have shifted to other fishing or fish processing activities remain ready to shift back into groundfish if and when that fishery reopens.
(HRDC, 1998a: iv)

This kind of statement forces one to question whether or not TAGS was truly successful in meeting its adjustment objective.

Table 5.1: Estimates* of Those Exiting the Fishery Under NCARP, 1994.

	Total	Fish Harvesters		Plant Workers	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Took Early Retirement	1,436	596	81	296	463
Took Groundfish Licence Retirement	376	329	45	1	1
Adjusted via Training for Work Outside the Fishery**	1,250	253	35	375	587
Total	3,062	1,178	161	672	1,051

* To get the gender breakdown, the gender-specific occupational data of the 1991 census (Newfoundland fishery labour force by occupation and gender) was used. The raw data are contained in Appendix A.

** This represents a subset of the 17,074 clients who took training, of which 14,091 trained for work inside the fishery (see Savoie, 1994).

Table 5.2: Estimates* of Those Exiting the Fishery Under TAGS.

	Total	Fish Harvesters		Plant Workers	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Took Early Retirement	1,179	488	66	244	381
Took Groundfish Licence Retirement	313	273	37	1	2
Adjusted via Training for Work Outside the Fishery	1,040	210	29	312	489
Adjusted via Training for Work Inside the Fishery	9,595	2,955	403	2,432	3,805
Total	12,127	3,926	535	2,989	4,677

* In deriving these estimates it is assumed that the occupational and gender breakdown follow the same pattern as under NCARP (see Table 5.1).

5.2 Analysis of the Factors Affecting Adjustment

Clients of NCARP and TAGS appear to have been misled from the beginning of the moratorium in 1992. In hindsight, it appears that government may have misled those directly affected in several ways. First, when the moratorium was announced in 1992, the government referred to it as a two year closure. This implied that the groundfishery would reopen in 1994. Many clients delayed making choices regarding their future adjustment plans, others never really accepted the validity of the moratorium. Second, the evidence suggests that government did not make it sufficiently clear to clients that there would need to be significant reductions in the numbers of people involved in the fishery. The objectives of NCARP and TAGS were to remove a large portion of the fishery labour force from the industry. However, this was not an accepted objective for those receiving benefits. The government neglected to define exactly who would be staying in the fishery and who would be leaving. It appears that TAGS officials failed to follow the advice of Savoie's (1994) evaluation: to come to terms with the fact that not every fishery dependent community will survive. The fishery of the future will have to be significantly reduced and some fish plants will have to close permanently. The evidence indicates that this did not happen under TAGS. According to HRDC (1996), the "failure to designate plants" which would remain active in the future fishery, and alternatively those that would close, not only hindered the program, but was also one of the elements which severely disadvantaged women. This appears to indicate that there was little attention given to previous research and documented experience as TAGS replaced NCARP.

However, while one can criticize the government for neglecting to provide clear direction to individuals in the target group, reference must be made to several other factors. First, it may be argued that the will of the provincial government, at the time of the moratorium, was not strong enough to face the political consequences of establishing this “fishery of the future” within the time frame contemplated. When the moratorium was announced, fishery workers were in a state of shock and anger. Many will remember the violence which erupted in a local St. John’s hotel as angry fish harvesters and plant workers tried to gain access to the federal fisheries minister. The government was criticized for not officially designating which fish plants would be part of the future groundfishery. There is no question that this move would have helped those affected come to realize sooner that the fishery would never return to its former state. However, the political cost of designating which fish harvesters and plant workers would be part of the future groundfishery was too great and perhaps would have led to more violence.

Second, it was reported by Savoie (1994) that the “turf battles” between different government departments and different levels of government impeded the task of diversifying the skills of the fishery labour force and the economy of rural Newfoundland and Labrador. It is evident that these turf battles remained as TAGS replaced NCARP. While it was the responsibility of HRDC to carry out objectives such as training inside the fishery, it was the responsibility of the DFO and the provincial government of Newfoundland to designate which plants would be part of this fishery of the future. According to HRDC (1998a), the objectives and principles of TAGS were to be realized through several program components including,

a capacity reduction process *delivered by DFO and the provinces* and aimed at a 50% reduction in harvesting *and processing capacity* in the groundfish industry.
(HRDC, 1998a: 12) [emphasis added]

Cooperation between government departments and coordination of policies did not occur, at least not to the degree required²⁰. As unfortunate as this was, it once again points to a lack of reference and attention by TAGS officials to the NCARP evaluation. In fact, Savoie stated as one of his principal conclusions from NCARP, that

relevant departments at both levels of government must, far more than they have during the past twenty months, coordinate their policies and efforts. The turf battles of the past two years should, if nothing else, point the way on how to avoid them in the future. The task at hand is nothing short of transforming a rural society in the case of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is an immense challenge and will require the cooperation of many government departments and countless policy actors whether in public, parapublic or private sectors.
(Savoie, 1994:iii)

Third, the initial adjustment target of TAGS to remove 50 percent of the fishery labour force from the industry was much too ambitious. The size of the client population was underestimated and there were not enough counsellors to meet the demand. Ideally, counsellors were to assist clients in assessing their employment needs, and developing and implementing an action plan. Counsellors, however, were overwhelmed by the number of clients eligible to receive program benefits. In order to compensate for this oversight, the

²⁰ see HRDC (1998a):15

target number of clients to be adjusted had to be altered. With cuts in the active programming budget, the final target number was modified to 12,000 clients (HRDC, 1998a)²¹.

As TAGS replaced NCARP, officials continued to offer clients the 'training within the fishery' option. Government appeared to be caught off guard by the fact that most clients chose this adjustment option rather than the 'training outside the fishery' option. However, it was not reasonable for government officials to expect that people would voluntarily leave an industry on which they depended for their very survival. Savoie (1994) noted that there was a "strong attachment" to the fishery. Given the bleak economic alternatives and poor employment prospects in other industries the decision of so many clients to train within the fishery was rational. It appears as though under NCARP and TAGS the failure of government departments to coordinate their policies and efforts led to the implementation of conflicting program objectives²². Government expected to reduce the size of the fishery labour force while at the same time offering clients the opportunity to retrain within the fishery.

Professionalization programs were offered to fish harvesters and fish plant workers under NCARP and TAGS, however it was expected that those participating in professionalization would be designated as part of the fishery of the future (HRDC,

²¹ At the end of 1996, an estimated 12,000 clients had adjusted out of the groundfish industry, while an estimated 28,000 had not (HRDC, 1998a: ii). The target number was modified from 15,000 to 12,000 (HRDC 1998a: 44).

²² see e.g. Savoie (1994) and HRDC (1998a).

1998). Savoie (1994) noted that HRD officials were skeptical of professionalization and plant worker training under NCARP:

For one thing, professionalization training does precious little to get fishery workers out of the fishing industry...In addition, they point out that no one is talking about a return of the Northern Cod in the near or medium term. Given the above, they remain uncertain about future training needs for plant workers. As one HRD official reports: "It really makes little sense to train people for an industry unless we know what the industry will need." (Savoie, 1994: 23-25)

The results of NCARP should have been an indication to TAGS officials that the majority of clients were going to select training within the fishery if it was offered to them as an adjustment option. According to Savoie (1994:67), a total of 17,074 NCARP recipients opted for training. Approximately 14,091 clients opted for training for work inside the fishery, while 2,983 decided to train for work outside the fishery. Savoie indicated that over the life of NCARP officials learned important characteristics about the training within the fishery option. First, that fishery workers are firmly attached to their industry and second, they are reluctant to consider other options.

It appears that TAGS officials reacted hastily by offering the option of training within the fishery too quickly. It should have been made clear from the beginning who would be part of the future fishery and, once established, only these clients should have been permitted to participate in professionalization and skills upgrading (Savoie, 1994).

It is apparent from the final evaluation report completed by HRDC (1998a) that TAGS did not fare any better than NCARP in removing clients from the fishery. In the

report, officials surveyed clients about their future expectations and half of the clients felt that they would be either fishing or working in a fish plant in the year 2000. Moreover, they explained that the “resilience of the stay-inside-the-fishery attitude,”

reflects the ambiguity surrounding the future of the fishery-plants were not designated as staying open or closing, plant workers were receiving confusing and often conflicting messages about the future of their jobs, and many were hearing rumors about the state of groundfish stocks and possibilities that the fishery might re-open.
(HRDC, 1998a:38)

This is yet another example of the lack of attention to previous experience which occurred as TAGS replaced NCARP. In addition, it demonstrates how the turf battles between government departments affected the progress of TAGS. The evidence shows that, under TAGS, government failed to provide any direction or indication as to which fish plants would be involved in the fishery of the future. Savoie (1994) recommended that

...the sooner someone, it appears that only governments have the mandate and legitimacy to do so, outlines in specific terms the “core fishery” of tomorrow, the sooner the process of adjustment can begin for individuals and communities and the sooner the groundfish industry can renew itself.
(Savoie, 1994:61)

5.3 Summary

Several factors led to the failure of NCARP and, in particular TAGS to meet the adjustment expectations of the participants in the groundfishery. The apparent turf battles between different government departments and different levels of government culminated in a failure to coordinate policies and efforts. Perhaps it was this intergovernmental conflict which was the most significant factor leading to the obscurity and confusion surrounding these programs. However, as significant as these problems were for both programs, that Savoie's (1994) NCARP evaluation noted these turf battles as a barrier to progress which should be avoided is the most troublesome finding. The evidence points to a lack of attention to previous research and experience on the part of those responsible for implementing TAGS, explicable only in terms of the political realities of the day.

This analysis leads the discussion to the final research question; whether or not NCARP and TAGS met adequately the needs of women working in the processing sector? Many authors have argued that these adjustment programs neglected the needs of women working in the processing sector. Indeed, one could argue, based on the previous analysis, that the factors affecting adjustment had an impact on the ability of these programs to meet the different needs of both genders.

Section 6.0 Meeting the Needs of Women in the Processing Sector: An Analysis of Adjustment

6.1 Training outside the Fishery

NCARP and TAGS clients had a variety of options to choose from. Under NCARP, clients had five options: training outside the fishery, professionalization within the fishery, early retirement, licence retirement, or the minimum payment (\$225/week), which a client received if they did not choose any of the other options. TAGS clients, on the other hand, developed career action plans with their counsellors. Once they received this counselling they could choose between various options including early retirement, training inside or outside the fishery, relocation assistance, self employment assistance and “green projects.”

Arguably, one of the most criticized options offered by NCARP and TAGS was training, specifically, “training outside of the fishery.” Many NCARP and TAGS counsellors have been accused of discrimination by encouraging women to train in “pink collar” programs such as secretarial studies, hairstyling, and personal service jobs, while encouraging men to participate in technical training, construction trades and heavy equipment operation²³.

In the summer of 1995, about 70 women from the Northern Peninsula and Labrador Straits area working as fishers launched a court challenge against the TAGS regulations. They also complained to the Canadian Human Rights Commission that they were being denied TAGS because of discrimination on the basis of sex.
(Williams, 1996:29)

²³ see also HRDC (1996)

At first glance, this argument appears valid. Williams provides evidence to support her position, indicating that twelve percent of female TAGS clients trained in clerical/secretarial programs, 6.4 percent as beauticians, hairstylists, housekeepers, nannies and other personal service jobs, while only five percent of women trained in more male-dominated programs such as construction labourers and “few” as heavy equipment operators or in other construction-related trades. Arguably, she implies that more women should have been trained in these male-dominated programs.

However, there is some evidence to the contrary. Prospects’93 is a document published in 1993 by the provincial Department of Education and Employment and Immigration Canada. This document provided labour market prospects and was used by Canada Employment Centre (CEC) staff and NCARP counsellors when evaluating training prospects and counselling clients. The report provided counsellors with the ratings of employment prospects in many different areas. These ratings were “poor,” “fair,” “good,” or “excellent.” In addition, counsellors could refer to an ‘imbalance indicator,’ which compared the minimum number of Unemployment Insurance (U.I.) beneficiaries in an occupation in 1992 with the experienced labour force for the occupation in question as per the 1991 Census. The ratio for all occupations was 19 percent (one beneficiary for every five people in the labour force). If the ratio for an occupation exceeded 19 percent this was an indication that there was a significant number of experienced workers already unemployed relative to the size of the occupation. Counsellors could also refer to employers’ comments regarding a specific occupation. This was based on feedback from surveys of employers who employed workers in particular occupations. As a result,

counsellors would use this information to guide clients towards occupations in which they were most likely to find employment.

Prospects '93 contains labour market prospects for a variety of "pink collar" occupations, as well as some of the more male-dominated jobs. The results are surprising. Job prospects in occupations such as secretarial/office administration and hairstyling/cosmetology studies were rated as fair to good, while most of the male-dominated fields such as heavy equipment operation, bricklaying and carpentry had very poor job prospects. Nevertheless, males participated in these programs because they were more likely than females to move outside of Newfoundland to find employment. While women were as likely as men to accept mobility assistance, they were less inclined to actually move (Robinson, 1997:9)²⁴. Considering the extremely difficult economic circumstances that clients and counsellors were facing at the time, one should bear this document in mind before criticizing the advice given by counsellors. While it may appear, on the surface, that counsellors were discriminating against women, this document suggests that counsellors acted in good faith and with good intentions and made appropriate decisions given the circumstances.

6.2 Benefit Rates

Many female plant workers were facing plant closures and fewer weeks of work before the moratorium was called in 1992 (Rove 1991; and Palmer 1992). During the period 1989-92, women experienced lower Unemployment Insurance (U.I.) earnings and

fewer weeks of work due to resource shortages. However, the benefit rates for both the NCARP and TAGS programs were based on an individual's average U.I. weekly rate for this same period. For NCARP, the monthly benefit rate was 70 percent of the average U.I. weekly rate over the years 1989-91 (Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union, 1993). The TAGS benefit rate was based on the average U.I. benefit rate for the period 1990-92. In many cases, women would work night shifts in the plants so they would be able to care for their children in the daytime. When it became evident that the groundfish resources were in crisis, the irregular shifts, such as night shifts, were eliminated (Rowe, 1991). As a result, women received lower benefit rates under both NCARP and TAGS (Williams, 1996). This points to a lack of awareness regarding the different needs of women going back well before the moratorium.

6.3 Program Eligibility

Furthermore, from the available research, it appears that women have had a shorter duration of eligibility on TAGS than men. According to Williams, 50 percent of male fish plant workers were eligible to receive benefits until the end of the program, whereas only 27.2 percent of female fish plant workers were eligible for this period. Williams explains this by noting that women were more likely to have interruptions in their work history due to family responsibilities. Several authors, before Williams, have made note of the fact that women were relegated to the direct processing jobs in the fish plants, such as cutting, trimming and packing, in addition to working night shifts (see e.g. Rowe 1991). As a

²⁴ For a somewhat different conclusion see HRDC (1996).

result, the jobs occupied by women were more vulnerable to the effects of catch failure than those of male plant workers. The situation was made even more difficult for women, since,

...under TAGS, fishers-*but not plant workers*-were permitted to use catch failure as an extenuating circumstance in order to qualify for TAGS.
(Williams, 1996:26) [emphasis added]

However, both programs did establish mechanisms in an attempt to ensure that everyone who was eligible to receive benefits did so. For example, under NCARP, any individual who was not deemed eligible for the Licence Retirement program could have requested to have their case reviewed by a joint industry-government review committee (Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union, 1993). Under TAGS, an appeals process was established. In May 1995, two Independent Review Panels were set up, one for processing workers and one for fish harvesters (Williams, 1996).

6.4 Child Care Allowance

Adequate child care has long been recognized as essential to women's labour force participation²⁵. Kealey (1986) focuses specifically on the importance of adequate daycare which meets the needs of working women. Kealey noted that government needed to ensure the status of women in the labour force by providing more suitable daycare to women in Newfoundland. While women have, arguably, come a long way in achieving

equality in the work force, their role in the home and the reality that they are responsible for the care of children has not changed much.

Child care, especially under TAGS, was subject to a great deal of criticism. Child care allowances were provided. But there were problems. First of all, many women often did not know it existed or they did not qualify for this assistance for various reasons. Some women found the criteria surrounding the child care allowance to be very rigid. For some of the women interviewed by HRDC,

...the rule that a child care allowance is not available if the caregiver lives in the same house was an obstacle...we encountered situations where the caregiver was a grandparent or other relative who, some clients felt, should not be expected to care for the child for free.
(HRDC, 1996:25)

Women living in rural areas where there is very little formal daycare require more flexible help if they are to participate in the labour force. Relying on one's family for help has always been a part of life in rural Newfoundland. However, this does not mean that you take unfair advantage of your family, or take their services for granted. This point was made by a number of women.

However, it would not be fair to suggest that the government did not recognize the need for daycare in rural Newfoundland. According to Mrs. Barbara Reid²⁵ of the Department of Human Resources Development Canada, this certainly was not the case.

²⁵ see e.g. Kcaley (1986); and Public Service Commission (1985).

²⁶ personal communication, 28 August 2000

Under TAGS there was no documented rationale for the policy that a child care allowance cannot be paid if the caregiver lives in the same household. However, in the opinion of Mrs. Reid the policy was that if a child resided in the same home as the caregiver then the child was considered part of that family. As a result, if the child lived in the same household as the caregiver it was not deemed reasonable to expect the taxpayers to pay for daycare. The government recognized the effects on incentives that this policy would have. In order to prevent potential fraudulent use, as a result of these incentives, they had to establish rules pertaining to the qualifications and disbursement of the child care allowance. In any case, if a member of the extended household was unwilling to care for the child, then the parent had the option of looking outside the home to find an alternate caregiver.

6.5 Early Retirement

Under NCARP and TAGS early retirement programs were available for fish harvesters and plant workers who wished to leave the industry permanently. Under NCARP, in order to be eligible for the Northern Cod Early Retirement Program, a fish harvester, plant worker or trawlerman must be at least 55 years of age and be eligible for NCARP benefits. In addition, they had to have “demonstrated a long-term attachment to the Northern cod fishery” (Fish, Food and Allied Workers Union, 1993). The key period relevant for determining this “long-term attachment” was 1987-1991. Under TAGS, any client who wanted to take the early retirement option had to be between 55 and 64 years of age. However, the TAGS early retirement program did not adequately take into

account years of experience in its eligibility criteria²⁷. In the opinion of an anonymous source at HRDC, historical attachment should have been factored into the requirements for early retirement under TAGS. It is possible that had historical attachment been considered the early retirement criteria may have allowed the age of eligibility to be lowered towards 50. Arguably, the government could have saved money by eliminating from the early retirement program those individuals who reached the age requirement but only had five or six years of experience working in the fishery. The money should instead have gone to those who had 25 to 30 years of experience in the fishery but who perhaps were not 55 years of age²⁸. Many clients felt that too much emphasis was placed on the age requirement and not enough on the years of work experience. HRDC should have been able to assess labour force attachment for processing workers by gender using their record of Employment Insurance (E.I.) applications or using company records. From the available research it does not appear that this occurred.

In this area the author has some personal experience. During the summer of 1998, while working in the Ministers' Regional Office in St. John's, I responded to phone calls from many plant workers (mostly women) who were upset because they did not qualify for the early retirement package since they had not reached the stipulated age 55. What made them even more upset was that some of these women had 25 or 30 years of experience working in a plant, while their neighbor, who reached the age requirement, had only five or six years of experience. It is evident that in this regard TAGS was insensitive

²⁷ see HRDC (1998b). The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy: Post-TAGS Review Report.

to the needs of working women in rural Newfoundland. Most of the plant workers in Newfoundland began working in fish plants at a very early age, some as early as 15 years of age²⁹. In these cases individuals had accumulated a life-time of work experience by age 45. This yet again points to a lack of attention by officials to recognize the differential needs of female processing workers under both NCARP and TAGS.

6.6 Summary

In some respects the NCARP and TAGS programs have been unfairly criticized for their treatment of female clients. However, in terms of adjustment options which provided financial support to women, such as benefit rates, program eligibility and early retirement, these two programs did not meet adequately the needs of women working in the processing sector of the fishery.

Given the fact that several authors, before the moratorium, documented the situation facing women working in the processing sector, this is indeed an unfortunate conclusion.

²⁸ Opinion of an anonymous source at the Department of Human Resources Development Canada with which this author agrees.

²⁹ see e.g. Woodrow and Ennis (1994).

Section 7.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

It is evident that providing answers to the research questions stated in Section one is not straightforward. Clearly, factors other than those covered here contributed to the failure of NCARP and TAGS to meet adequately the adjustment expectations of participants in the groundfishery.

When the moratorium was announced in 1992 thousands of fishery workers found themselves unemployed. Those directly responsible for responding to the crisis realized that too many workers were dependent on the industry. This realization was important, but it ran contrary to the tradition of operating the fishery based on the employment needs of communities. However, it is clear that adjusting this labour force to other alternative sources of employment would prove to be a difficult task indeed.

NCARP and TAGS were intended to be the means to solving this problem. The stated objectives were to remove significant portions of the fishery labour force from the industry. Many barriers would stand in the way of successful adjustment; barriers which, arguably, could have been anticipated with adequate research. Nonetheless, both programs were adversely affected by the advanced age of the fishery labour force, low levels of formal education, and by the fact that the majority of the clientele lived in isolated areas characterized by high levels of unemployment. We can conclude from the evidence that NCARP and TAGS failed to meet the adjustment expectations of participants in the groundfishery primarily because of the continuous intergovernmental conflict and turf battles, which prevented government departments from coordinating their efforts and had

a negative impact on their progress. Furthermore, from an analysis of the evaluation reports for NCARP and TAGS, it is apparent that government officials especially those responsible for TAGS, failed to heed the conclusions and recommendations of previous research and experience.

Women working in the processing sector of the fishery have also been seriously affected by the fishery crisis. Many NCARP and TAGS counsellors have been accused of discriminating against women by encouraging them to participate in traditionally female-dominated occupations. Accusations of this nature are very serious, especially when one is dealing with government officials in positions of trust and authority. This research finds that, in part, these accusations were unwarranted. The evidence examined demonstrates that counsellors made appropriate decisions and acted in the best interests of their clients given the circumstances. Government officials responsible for the child care allowance were also accused of not recognizing the daycare needs of women in rural communities. The rule that a child care allowance would not be given to a caregiver who lived in the same household as the child was felt to be too rigid by the clients. However, this rule was established to avoid the potential for fraud and to be fair to everyone concerned.

Nonetheless, the conflict which occurred between government departments also affected the ability of NCARP and TAGS to meet adequately the needs of women working in the processing sector. NCARP and TAGS officials did not take into consideration, at least not to the extent necessary, the different circumstances in which most women found themselves prior to the moratorium. Benefit rates were lower and duration of eligibility for these programs shorter for women because they were based

mainly on years of work experience immediately prior to the moratorium (1989-92).

Moreover, many women with 25 to 30 years of work experience in the groundfishery found themselves ineligible for the early retirement program because they did not reach the stipulated age of 55 in the required time frame. But paradoxically, many women with only five or six years of work experience found themselves securing a place in the early retirement program simply because they met the age requirement before the deadline.

The reality of adjustment under these programs is simple. Most clients who successfully adjusted out of the groundfishery did so by training for work in other sectors of the fishery. As a result, the problems created by an excess labour supply in an industry often plagued by resource shortage have not been resolved. On the contrary, an overabundance of labour in the fishery still exists and, therefore, the ability of the industry to react to shortages in resource supply remains poor. Problems such as these have been forced onto species such as snow crab and shrimp to be dealt with in the future.

When the government realized that the fish stocks were in a state of collapse in 1992, they should have given themselves adequate time to devise a strategy about how to approach this problem. This could have been done by simplifying NCARP and making it solely an income support program. By including other options such as retraining and early retirement the government was spending taxpayers' money to adjust a client population about which they knew very little of relevance to the program's success. If NCARP had been exclusively an income support program officials could have given themselves two years to establish a group or task force which could have studied the target clientele and learned about the "barriers to adjustment." It is quite possible that after two years officials

would have been better equipped to adjust a greater proportion of the fishery labour force out of the industry. However, it is also possible that they may have come to the conclusion that attempting to establish an adjustment objective of 50 percent of the labour force out of the fishery in four years would be simply unattainable. TAGS would then have been more focused and better prepared to meet the adjustment needs of clients.

If one looks at the history of the TAGS program it is apparent that this process of simplification inevitably occurred. In 1996, two years after the beginning of TAGS, the government realized that they had underestimated the size of the client population and, as a result, they ended all training programs and put the remaining funds into income support. Evidently, TAGS went from being a program composed of many complex adjustment options to one mainly focused on income support.

My research suggests that the parties involved are so concerned about supporting their own claims that they have lost sight of the main analytical question of why these programs failed and why the same lessons seem to be learned repeatedly. Arguably, it is very much in the public interest that these issues be probed further without attempts to apportion blame.

In conclusion, this paper attempts to take a balanced perspective on this issue. Indeed, the evidence supports the working hypothesis of this Major Report. In particular, it is apparent that the NCARP and TAGS programs neglected to meet adequately the needs of women working in the processing sector primarily because of a lack of attention to previous research and experience.

7.2 Recommendations

#1 Turf battles and intergovernmental conflict must stop. As demonstrated in this Major Report, progress is hampered, policies conflict, and clients are not treated appropriately when government departments fail to coordinate their efforts. Although this recommendation was made in the past, it is important to emphasize it once again.

#2 It is imperative that Government pay attention to previous research and experience in order to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

#3 Within each of the government departments involved in these programs, an internal study should be completed. Those who worked with clients and with the criteria that were developed should feel free to openly discuss their experiences with NCARP and TAGS and record what they feel to be the important lessons and mistakes to be avoided in possible future adjustment programs.

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Appendix A

Appendix A

Individuals Exiting the Fishery Under NCARP.

	Total	Fishers	Plantworkers
Took Early Retirement	1,436	677	759
Took Groundfish Licence Retirement	376	374	2
Adjusted, Path to Adjustment via Training for Work Outside the Fishery	1,250	288	962
Total	3,062	1,339	1,763

Source: Gardner Pinfold Consulting Economists Ltd. (1994).

