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The concept of fisheries-dependent communities – a comparative analysis of four UK case studies:
Shetland, Peterhead, North Shields and Lowestoft

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Abstract

Through case studies of four fisheries-dependent communities on the East coast of the UK, we examine what is meant by ‘fisheries-dependence’ and what is meant by a ‘fisheries-dependent community.’ We also explore the various ‘coping’ strategies deployed by different ‘fisheries-dependent communities’ in response to the difficulties presently facing the fishing industry. We investigate the relationship between the degree of fisheries dependency as experienced by a community, and the nature and objectives of the coping strategy chosen. Perhaps unsurprising, we learn that community constructed coping strategies are tailored to meet the community’s specific needs, and so differ, quite markedly, between communities. Interestingly, we find that even in a community where there is little fisheries-dependency the coping strategy employed still supports the fishing industry, but as a cultural icon rather than as a growing concern. Within such communities fishing is appreciated and valued for its crucial role in both the narrative and identity of the community. It appears a ‘virtual’ fishing industry appears to have succeeded the ‘real’ fishing industry in such communities.

Introduction

One of the objectives of the 2002 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was to safeguard the position of ‘coastal areas dependent on fishing’. In the so-called ‘Roadmap’ (CEC 2002a, para 3.7: 22) it is stated that:

‘Given the lengthy time period over which recovery will be needed, a long-term strategy for integrated development of coastal areas currently dependent on fisheries should be considered for implementation after 2006’

Fisheries-dependence is a term used by the EU and carries political importance since it is those coastal areas that are deemed fisheries dependent that will benefit from EU funds and redevelopment programmes. But what exactly do we mean by fisheries-dependence? Furthermore what are fisheries-dependent communities? These questions may seem self explanatory, but in fact conceal fundamental problems of conceptual understanding. To be dependent is to be reliant upon someone or something, but what form may this reliance take? How might dependence be manifest? In economic, cultural, or perhaps physic terms? How then might a community be dependent upon the fishing industry? In this paper we explore how one might understand fisheries dependence and a fisheries dependent community. We also examine how communities that have traditionally been tied to the fortunes of the fishing industry have coped over the last few years when restructuring, policies and environmental factors have resulted in the contraction of the industry. In this paper we use a comparative analysis of four case studies – Shetland Isles, Peterhead, North Shields and Lowestoft – to examine, first, the extent of their respective dependence on fisheries; and second, how they have used the opportunities open to them to respond to the problems encountered by being dependent upon an industry that is experiencing sever difficulties.

The concept of a fisheries-dependent community

There are two questions here: how do we define ‘fisheries-dependence’; and how do we define a ‘community’?

The most familiar definition of fisheries-dependence is cast in largely economic terms. In the 1994 PESCA Guidelines a fisheries-dependent area is defined as ‘an employment area...where the contribution of the fisheries sector to economic activity (as measured in terms of jobs and added value) is such that the difficulties of the fisheries sector have resulted or will result in the slackening of activity and job losses which seriously undermines the socio-economic fabric’ (quoted in Phillipson 2000:26; cf SAC 1999b; Thomson 2002: 7). Quite what level of employment in fisheries is required to constitute fisheries-dependence is, however, contestable. Lindkvist (2000: 56) suggests 5% of the working population of a given area, but Symes (2000: 11) refers to a figure of 10%. Some alternative definitions of fisheries-dependence focus upon the contributions made by fisheries products to the total GDP of the community, again displaying an economic understanding of the term.

However, there is another conception of fisheries-dependence, based not so much on economics as on culture (Nuttall 2000: 108-109). Here fisheries-dependence is not distilled into a matter of simple economic dependence, instead the fishing industry is seen to be the forum through which community bonds, values, knowledge, language and traditions are established, confirmed and passed on. The fishing industry is ‘the way of life’ for the community, and the community understands and makes sense of the world from a perspective that is garnered from years of involvement with the fishing industry. For fisheries-dependent communities fishing is the glue that holds the community together. As Jacob et al (2001: 17, 18) claim, fisheries-dependence ‘relates to the ‘character of the community...there is a dependence on an industry to support the sense of community and the history of that community’ This more cultural slant to an understanding of fisheries-dependence is confirmed by van Ginkel (2001: 177) who claims that ‘fishing is not merely a job, it is also a way of life...fishing can be of modest economic importance yet...provide a source of communal and personal identity’. This is why many fishers continue fishing even when it is no longer economic to do so. ‘Their relation to fishing is expressive and existential...Therefore, fishers often persist in working in a failed fishery’ (van Ginkel 2001: 189).

Having demonstrated that there are different aspects to ‘dependency’ there is a need to emphases that there are also different aspects to the fishing industry. There is for example an onshore/offshore distinction - processing and preparation of fish occurs mainly onshore whilst harvesting occurs offshore. There is also the aquaculture industry and associated support industries such as ship building and repair to appreciate. When considering fisheries-dependence it is important to take a broad understanding of the term and include the plethora of associated industries that enable the fishing industry to function. The actual catching sector is just one small part of the fishing industry as SAC (1999b: 96) has estimated ‘the number of jobs directly dependent on fishing is more than three times the number employed in catching alone.’ A further example of difference within the fishing industry is found within the inshore/offshore distinction. Within Europe 75% of the fishing boats in the EU fleet are small-scale, and they provide 44% of employment in the catching sector (CEC 2002b: 15). Coffey (2000: 166) argues that the inshore fleet ‘employs more people’ than the offshore fleet and Otterstad

(1996: 165) observes that, world wide, the small-scale inshore fisheries sector lands about 24m tonnes (ie between one quarter and a third of the total catch). Fisheries dependence refers then to dependence upon the fishing industry operating in both inshore and offshore locations and in onshore and offshore situations.

The second question concerning 'what is community' again elicits competing answers. Parsons (1960, pp250) treats community as an 'analytical category' and provides a tentative definition. He claims community is 'that aspect of the structure of social systems which is referable to the territorial location of persons and their activities.' However some commentators such as communitarians would argue that community is a deeper concept than Parsons suggests. Communitarians see community as a carrier and embodiment of a group's culture. To reduce community to a relationship between a population and a location would be seen as a disservice to the concept. For some community could even be understood in entirely non-specially specific terms. A community could be perceived as being a physiological state of 'togetherness' or identification. Therefore members of the 'community' could in fact be widely geographically dispersed.

The concept of a fisheries dependent community, once broken down into its constituent parts, appears to be a most complex and ambiguous phenomenon than one may at first presume. However, we suggest a tentative definition; a fisheries-dependent community is a population in a specific territorial location which relies upon the fishing industry for its continued economic, social and cultural survival. Jacob et al (2001: 17) point out though, that such a strict definition 'would require that the very existence of the given community be threatened by the removal or gross alteration of the enterprise'. On such a definition there would be very few true fisheries-dependent communities. Most critics adopt a looser definition, in which substantial, but not fatal, damage would be caused to a fisheries-dependent community by the loss of fishing. It might be better then if we define a fisheries-dependent as a population in a specific territorial location which relies upon the fishing industry for its continued economic, social and cultural success. What specific level of territorial location should be used though for identifying a fisheries dependent community? This question has raised some debate amongst commentators. While few writers would use the level of a nation state (with the possible exception of countries such as Iceland), some suggest that the appropriate territorial level to use for purposes of identifying a fisheries dependent community is that of coastal region (Otterstad, Phillipson and Symes 1997: 16). Others however, argue for the use of a local or municipal territorial level (Nielsen, Vedsmand, and Friis 2000; Moniz (et al) 2000; Haugh and Pardy 2000). Uniquely though, Symes (2000: 212) claims that 'Over much of Europe... fisheries dependence can only clearly be identified at the level of the individual household'. Yet to reduce community to the level of the household is perhaps to go too far. Within the relevant literature community is usually thought to refer to more than just the four or five people that share a house. Within our definition of a fisheries dependent community we have chosen to use the local or municipal territorial level because it is at this level that the dependence on fisheries is generally most acute. For example, whereas in Scotland as a whole, the catching, fish farming and processing sectors account for only 0.9% of employment, and in Scottish coastal regions they only account for 1.6%, they account for 11 % in Shetland and 14% in Peterhead (Thomson 2002: 1, 3).

Constraints and Opportunities for Fishing Dependent Communities

The European fishing industry is currently in a traumatic period of change. Quotas, licenses and decommishoning directives have led to significant concentration and contraction of the fleet. Warnings of dangerously depleted fish stocks and lobbying by environmental groups have resulted in sever restrictions on catch sizes. The introduction of larger more technologically advanced vessels is changing the composition of the European fleet and at the same time leading to the marginalisation of some smaller fishing ports that are unable to accommodate these new deep-bottomed trawlers. The fisheries-dependent community exists within uncertain times as the future of the fishing industry seems to rest precariously in the hands of politicians and the forces of nature! However the demand for fish is still high and fishers themselves often argue that fish stocks are in quite good shape. Considering this context we have identified certain key factors that act to both constrain fisheries-dependent communities and also provide opportunities for their future success.

Factors constraining fisheries dependent communities

We believe there to be two main kinds of factors that most constrain fisheries-dependent communities and hinder their opportunity for success - these are economic and political factors.

Economic factors constraining fisheries-dependent communities

1. The globalisation of the fish food industry - The European single market and the wider global free market means that local fishers and processors no longer enjoy privileged access to home markets and instead have to compete alongside multinational companies.

2. 'Capital penetration' (Symes 1996a: 8) - Companies invest heavily in 'industrial modes of exploitation', equipping large vessels with technically advanced equipment capable of hoovering up huge amounts of fish, landed at large ports with sophisticated facilities (SAC 1999b: 163). Smaller fishers without access to such resources and technology therefore become disadvantaged.

3. Mobility of labour - Many younger workers leave small, fisheries-dependent communities because they prefer to live in more exciting urban areas, and to work in more pleasant and better paid occupations than the fishing industry (Piriz (2000: 125). These young people see only limited opportunities ahead if they remain within the fisheries-dependent community.

As a result of these three factors, as van Vliet (2000: 157) notes, we 'see the decline and disintegration of traditional fishing communities under the process of modernisation'. Fishing activity is being concentrated in fewer hands as larger organisations become more and more dominant (Symes 2000: 212). For example, in Scotland, as SESR (2002: 83) points out, 'the number of boats wholly owned by companies is increasing, particularly among the larger sized vessels for pelagic catch. The vessels are radically altering the fishery from the traditional family operation into large commercial concerns operating to scale economies.' For example, within Lowestoft, prior to its closure, Colne Fishing Ltd used to own virtually the entire local offshore fleet. When it closed there was only the family owned vessels of the inshore fleet left. This 'corporate take over' of the fishing industry has meant that fishing has become increasingly detached from local communities (Piriz 2000: 124). Within North Shields for example the local fleet lands only 10% of the total catch that is landed at the port. Furthermore in winter the fish market would have to close down if it were not for the arrival of the visiting Scottish fleet.

Political factors constraining fisheries-dependent communities

The political factors constraining fisheries-dependent communities include those features of management policies that 'wittingly or unwittingly buttress the competitive advantage of large-scale fishing enterprises operating on a full-time basis, over small-scale artisanal enterprises' (Symes 2000: 212). Indeed, Symes claims that 'many of the problems confronting fisheries dependent regions are today policy induced' (2000: 4) and that 'today, most fisheries policies, whether by intention or in effect, discriminate against part-time and, therefore, small-scale fishing in terms of licensing and quota allocations' (2000: 215). For example, one of the founding principles of the EU - free movement of capital and labour - directly militates against fisheries-dependent communities. Similarly with EU policies on fleet reduction, licences and quotas, all of which have, 'intentionally or otherwise, tended to favour the more specialised, large-scale and industrialised sectors of the fishing fleets at the expense of the small-scale inshore fleets' (Symes 2000: 4).

We can see this in Scotland, where a 'wave of decommissioning characterised by the development of smaller, more efficient fishing fleets operating in off-shore water...has been coupled with an act of investment in inshore areas where less profitable and less efficient vessels are in operation...The effect of this have [sic] been a gradual erosion of the economic vitality of many Scottish coastal and rural communities with a dependence upon the fishing sector' (SESR 2002: 10).

Indeed, Symes (2001:3) has argued that EU regulators have virtually written off the inshore sector, which explains why fisheries science focuses almost exclusively on the pelagic and demersal stocks that are caught by the offshore sector, with scant attention paid to inshore stocks. 'In truth we know very little about our inshore fisheries', especially shellfish (Symes 2001: 4).

Factors Presenting Opportunities to Fisheries-dependent Communities

Economic opportunities for fisheries-dependent communities

Although, as we have seen, the global economic system seems stacked against fisheries-dependent communities and their local fleets, there are some opportunities to challenge this situation. The small scale, local artisanal fishers operating within the community's local fleet have certain advantages over the larger capitalist fishers. These advantages can serve them well within the cut and thrust of the global economy. Typically, unlike a specialised crew-member on a large vessel, the artisanal fisher performs a variety of roles – fishing, selling the catch, maintaining the boat and engine, repairing nets – thereby internalising, and minimising overhead costs. Moreover, unlike capitalist fishers, artisanal fishers often cross-subsidise their fishing activities by taking supplementary employment onshore. As a result, artisanal fishers may be insulated against fluctuations in market conditions, and, unlike capitalist fishers, can continue fishing during long periods of adverse economic circumstances (Hansen and Hojrup 2001: 197).

Another reason why artisanal fishers are often able to hold their own against capitalist fishers is because they target widely dispersed and divergent coastal fish stocks, which afford large, specialised vessels little opportunity for economies of scale. 'In these circumstances, fishing undertaken with small, skipper owned boats and equipped with state of the art technology is the most competitive form of fishing for the fresh fish market' (Hansen and Hojrup 2001: 198). For these reasons, the artisanal mode of production is highly resilient.

A broader case for the economic opportunities afforded to agents in fisheries-dependent communities is advanced by van Vliet (2000: 157), who argues that the era of Fordist mass production in global fisheries is over. He claims that the focus has now shifted from the supply side to the demand side, and that the local fisheries sector can play an important role in moulding demand to the type of niche products which it can supply (van Vliet 2000: 158). Within North Shields there is the intention to create a premium North Shields' brand with which to market quality locally caught fish. The hope is to create a market and encourage demand for exclusive North Shields fish.

Political opportunities for fisheries-dependent communities

Although from the previous analysis of political structures it might seem that the regulators are exclusively concerned with the capitalistic mode of fisheries production, in fact there are important opportunities afforded by fisheries management for local agents to exploit for the benefit of fisheries-dependent communities. As Symes and Frangoudes (2001: 172) point out, political authorities have been 'ambivalent, torn between support for structural rationalisation and the need to protect employment in remoter coastal districts'. According to Symes (1996: 146), the latter objective seems to have driven governments to set TACs (total allowable catches) at levels beyond those recommended by scientists, and to subsidise vessel building and fishing activity, thereby prioritising social over ecological sustainability. It also drove the framers of the CFP when they adopted several provisions, including relative stability and special areas such as the six mile limits, the Hague Preferences and the Shetland Box (Symes 2000: 3).

However, Symes and Frangoudes (2001: 172) speculate that at least some of the provisions were inserted for administrative convenience, and Crean and Wisher (2000: 474) question whether the Shetland Box has been particularly helpful to Shetland's inshore fishers. Moreover, Symes (2000: 3-4) points out that the advantages to fisheries-dependent communities of relative stability has been largely neutralised by 'quota hopping' (whereby nationals of one Member State buy vessels with licences and quotas attached which belong to nationals of another Member State).

At the EU level, political support for fisheries-dependent communities has taken the form of various financial packages designed to modernise the fleet, improve port facilities and assist the communities directly through education and locally based initiatives. EU initiatives specifically for the fishing industry include PESCA and FIG (Financial Instruments for Fisheries Guidance). Fisheries dependent communities are also able to benefit from more general aid schemes, such as ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and ESF (European Social Fund), which have made available some

funds to fishing. The PESCA scheme, which lasted from 1994-99, was targeted explicitly at fisheries-dependent communities, to help them cope with the threats of globalisation and over-fishing, by both supporting the industry and encouraging diversification. Its distinctive feature was its bottom-up approach, 'offering scope for community-based initiatives', as Coffey (2000: 170) notes. This approach 'encouraged people to identify their own needs and ensured that projects were generated by local people rather than development agencies' (Stein 2000: 182).

The Western Isles Fishermen's Association affirmed that PESCA had yielded 'very significant benefits', not least because 'each local area had been given the opportunity of developing its own priorities in formulating a business plan', which resulted in 'excellent projects being undertaken to address local needs' (SAC 1999b: 156). The Scottish Office was equally impressed, and saw the 'model developed under PESCA...as the way forward in terms of future programme delivery' (SAC 1999b: 156). Moreover, independent consultants reported that the programme had an aggregated gross employment effect of 3,923 jobs (1,536 created and 2,360 maintained) with a cost per job of £1,797' (SAC 1999b: 158). All of our four case studies benefited from PESCA funding (Michie 2003; Harper 2002; Fisk 2002; Hume 2002).

On the other hand, there were criticisms of PESCA. First, it was only a five-year initiative, and was discontinued in 1999. Second, it had comparatively modest funds to distribute (SAC 1999b: 162). Third, it should have engaged the industry more directly (SAC 1999b: 93).

The Financial Instruments for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) scheme was first launched in 1993 to address the overcapacity problem of the European fleet. FIFG funds were originally used mainly for decommissioning vessels in line with the targets set out by the (Multi Annual Guidance programme (MAGP), but have also financed improvements in port facilities, processing, marketing and aquaculture. However, FIFG was subsequently integrated into the EU's structural funds programme, thereby contributing to socio-economic objectives. Measures eligible for FIFG funding include early retirement schemes for fishers aged 55 and over; lump sum payments to crew who have stopped fishing; temporary aid for fishers forced to suspend their fishing activities; improvement in working conditions (especially of small scale fishing) and in safety, training, technology, marketing and modernisation of vessels (CEC 2002b: 6, 8-10). FIFG support has also contributed significantly to the maintenance of employment in the processing sector (SAC 1999b: 93).

More general EU regional aid programmes, such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF), also offer opportunities to fisheries-dependent communities to access resources. SAC (1999b: 159; 162; 167, 168) reported the results of a stakeholder questionnaire which indicated considerable gratitude for ERDF and ESF funding of harbour improvements and fisheries training. On the other hand, the proportion of the ERDF's and ESF's budgets devoted to fisheries projects was very low; for example, in the Highlands and Islands during 1994-98, it was only 6.5% of ERDF's expenditure in the area, and only 3% of ESF's expenditure (SAC 1999b: 159). Moreover, many of these funding structures have favoured the offshore sector much more than the inshore sector (Coffey 2000: 165-6). As Symes (2000: 219) put it: 'Fisheries policy remains focused on fish stocks and fishing fleets with little or no direct concern for fisheries dependent areas'. Furthermore, even where the funds have been targeted at the inshore sector, they have not always achieved much, as the European Commission itself has belatedly recognised: 'Financial aid measures in favour of small-scale fisheries have not had the desired effect of protecting this sector. On the contrary, the share of small-scale fisheries in the fleet has constantly diminished over the years' (CEC 2002b: 15).

The Commission suggested that, because the main reason for the worsening position of the inshore fleets was competition from the offshore sector, Member States should consider instead reserving coastal areas (such as the 12 mile zones), and shares of national fishing effort, for small-scale vessels. In effect, however, this was to pass the buck to Member States for a problem largely created by the EU's CFP. What agents such as the Chair of the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament (EP) – Miguelez Ramos – wanted was for the European Commission to take direct responsibility for maintaining fisheries-dependent communities, not just as economic units, but as sources of cultural identity. In her speech to the EP, Ramos argued that 'Fishing...lies behind the cultural identity of my area [Galicia]...The EC must understand that diversification is only part of the solution. There are cultural, social, economic and moral reasons to defend the fishing way of life. We need the same support policies as other sensitive sectors, for example, agriculture' (*Fishing News* 9/2/01: 6).

This brings us to the final element of the political opportunities open to fisheries-dependent communities – those provided by national governments. In England, such opportunities centre round the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and the Fishing Communities' Regeneration Initiative (FCRI). The SRB, which was launched in 1994 to reduce regional disparities in the quality of life, was subsumed under the Regional Development Agencies' (RDA's) Single Programme in April 2002. Its remit was to promote job creation, enterprise, training, re-skilling, sustainable regeneration and social inclusion. The local authorities to which North Shields and Lowestoft belong – North Tyneside and Waveney, respectively – both obtained funding from the SRB (RCU: 2003). The FCRI was a 'one-off' grant of £5.5m. to help 'communities in regions with fishing ports' create 'local regeneration strategies' and get easier access to 'existing regeneration programmes' (Keeble 2001). The money was distributed by RDAs in response to bids put forward by local authorities and local partnerships (Fisk 2002). Again, both North Shields and Lowestoft made successful bids to this fund, obtaining aid not only for their fishing industries, but also for their diversification projects, channelled through One North East and the East of England Development Agency, respectively. However the funds obtained were not of a huge amount.

In Scotland, Scottish Enterprise is the main economic development agency, receiving its funds from the Scottish Executive. Its main task is to promote Scottish business, and it operates through a network of 12 Enterprise Companies (SE 2003). Shetland is served by the Highlands and Islands Enterprise Network, and Peterhead by Scottish Enterprise Grampian (HIEN 2003). Most economic development projects in the two communities are funded by these bodies. In addition, the Small Business Gateway, established by the Scottish Executive in 2001 to help businesses access local support services, assists Shetland through Shetland Enterprise, and Peterhead through the Enterprise North East Trust (SBG 2003). Lastly, the Local Economic Forums, launched by the Scottish Executive to streamline business services, have been used by both Shetland and Peterhead (SELEF 2003).

One issue that arises out of all these aid programmes is the extent to which they involve local stakeholders. The hypothesis has been advanced that the success of such schemes critically depends on their being owned by the fisheries-dependent communities themselves, rather than being provided from above by well-intentioned but poorly informed bureaucrats in Brussels or Whitehall. One of the reasons for the popularity of the PESCA scheme was its local level of administration. However some critics urge caution in expecting too much from local participation. For example, Phillipson and Symes (2001: 302) state that, 'However strongly modern theories of governance may argue in favour of devolved, participative management, there is no clear evidence from the national studies [published in their edited book] that state led, centralised management has in any way seriously disadvantaged the inshore sector'.

Case Studies

Within the following four case studies we explore how the various economic and political constraints and opportunities previously outlined have effected four different fisheries-dependent communities. We have chosen four UK fisheries-dependent communities bordering the North Sea because this fishery is facing severe decline, and this decline is widely believed to have serious impacts upon the local fisheries-dependent communities. The four communities - Shetland, Peterhead, North Shields and Lowestoft – were selected because of their different levels of fisheries-dependency; their differences in size, location, and economic and social conditions; and their different strategies for coping with an industry in a difficult state.

The method of research was documentary analysis of data obtained from the four local communities and from the internet, together with 14 telephone interviews with local fishers, fish wholesalers, fish processors and local authority economic development officers. The issues explored in the interviews were the general economic conditions in the communities; the place of fisheries in the community; the main agents for economic development; the economic strategies chosen, and how they were chosen and funded; and the structural constraints experienced by agents in selecting those strategies. We divide our findings on each of the four case studies into two parts – the degree of their fisheries-dependence; and the nature of their economic strategies, especially in relation to the fishing industry.

1) Shetland

First, of all the four communities studied Shetland is clearly the most fisheries-dependent. With a population of 23,000 in 2000 (SESR 2002: 50), an unemployment rate of 2.9% also in 2000 and a per capita income 20% higher than the rest of the UK, Shetland is a small and rather wealthy community. Revenue obtained from the growth of the offshore oil and gas industries and the service industry has swelled the coffers of the local Council to a sum of around £170 million. The fishing and fishing-related industries dominate the Shetland economy, with estimates of their contribution to total GDP ranging from 20.5% (SAC 1999b) to 41% (SIC 2002), and in 2002, for the first time, economic output for the industry exceeded £200 million. By comparison, the service sector (principally the council) contributes about 43%, and the offshore oil and gas sector contributes about 12%, to Shetland's economic output. According to John Goodlad (2002), 'fish and fish products account for over 80% of all Shetland's exports'. Furthermore, according to the Scottish Executive (SE 2002) around 11% of all jobs in Shetland are in the fishing industry with 600 jobs in catching; 400 jobs in aquaculture; and 900 jobs in processing. 22% of all jobs are estimated to be in fisheries/fisheries-related industries including supplies, repairs, equipment, and power, but not including the additional employment generated by the multiplier effect. Shetland operates a share ownership system, whereby most fishers are part owners of the vessels on which they work, therefore fishers are not only dependent on the fishery for their employment; they also have capital tied up in it (SAC 1999b: 112)

Despite its significance, the Shetland fleet has contracted from 82 vessels over 10 metres in length in 1995, to 62 in 2000 and lost approximately 26% of its whitefish fleet between 1989 and 2000. The 2001/2002 decommissioning scheme took out even more boats. It is estimated that fleet numbers 'declined by 40% over the last 13 years, with a loss of turnover of £2.5 million pa' (SSNO 2003).

By contrast, the aquaculture sector, largely salmon, expanded rapidly from 40 employees in 1984, to 387 employees in 2000. The processing sector also expanded during the 1990s, increasing its revenue from £25 million in 1991 to \$78.44 million in 1999. Shetland Catch, the largest pelagic processing factory in Europe, had a turnover of £43 million in 2002, which was 10% of the Islands' total economy (SIC 2003). The local fleet supplies about 50% of the fish processed by Shetland Catch and also has a 42% shareholding in the company (SC 2002). Of the total tonnage of fish landed in Shetland, 62% is landed by foreign vessels, but this is mainly of lower value pelagic species. The Shetland fleet lands mainly higher value whitefish and shellfish and therefore 60% of the total value of landed fish comes from Shetland's boats (SAC 1999b: 116).

Second, Shetland's economic strategy is to a large extent determined by the Islands' peripheral geographical location and harsh climate, which severely restricts the opportunities for economic diversification and the establishment of non-fishing related industries. According to both Steven Leask (2002), Development Manager for Shetland Enterprise, and Douglas Irvine (2002), Divisional Manager of Shetland Island Council's Development Department, it is difficult to envisage the local economy functioning without the fishing industry. Hansan Black (2002), of the Shetland Fishermen's Association, pointed out that because there was little chance of large organisations relocating to Shetland, future employment prospects necessarily rest with the fishing industry (cf SAC 1999b: 134).

Unsurprisingly, therefore, Shetland's strategy has been to support the fishing industry, in an effort to protect it from the external threats posed, such as falling fish stocks, reduced quota, and stricter CFP decommissioning targets. Of our four cases, Shetland is the most committed to an economic strategy that prioritises the fishing industry. As the Head of Development Resources in Shetland Council's Development Department, Alistair Cooper put it (2002), 'fishing is absolutely essential to the Shetlands, its loss would be catastrophic for the islands. Every effort must go into supporting and modifying the industry'. Moreover, the primary focus is on supporting the catching sector, because without the local fleet, Shetland's processing sector would not prosper, as few non-local boats can afford the transport costs of landing their catches at such a remote location (Cooper 2002).

The following initiatives indicate the scale of Shetland's mono-industrial policy. In 2000/2001, six key schemes to assist the fishing industry were in operation:

- 1) The Fishing Vessels Shareholders Loan Scheme - Provided individual fishers with unsecured loans of up to £75k to help purchase shares in fishing vessels and quotas
- 2) The First Time Shareholders Grant Scheme - Provided grants of up to £50k to individuals who wish to buy shares in a vessel for the first time.

- 3) The Fishing Vessels Modernisation Scheme - Provided fishers with the matched funding required to access resources from the CFP's FIFG programme, to pay for vessel modification.
- 4) The Fish Factory Improvement Scheme - Provided loans to processors to modernise their operations (since up to 60% of the fish landed in Shetland leaves the islands fresh, without being processed, there is significant potential for expansion of the added-value business in the processing sector)
- 5) The Salmon Farming Loan Assistance Scheme - Provided financial help to aquaculture companies.
- 6) The Shellfish Growers' Loan Assistance Scheme - Provided funds for the exploitation of the undeveloped shellfish sector (an example of economic diversification within the fisheries sector (Black 2002)).

Shetland Island Council also launched a high profile lobbying initiative through the Shetland's Ocean Alliance (SHOAL), which is a partnership between the council and the fishing industry's representatives. SHOAL acts to promote Shetland's fishing sector in both national and European policy-making forums. No other industry in Shetland has such a dedicated and powerful lobbying group (Cooper 2002).

All six schemes in 200/01 were fundamentally financial assistance programmes. The council has been able to afford such schemes because of the revenues it has obtained from the offshore oil and gas industry, which it invested in the Shetland Development Trust (SDT). This trust is worth around £170m. It used to be worth far more but has been damaged by problems with some investments and difficulties in the stock market. Although in Shetland's recent history oil and gas have proved significant contributors to the islands' economy these are finite resources. Already there are reports that one of the large oil terminals is likely to close in the near future, with the loss of 225 jobs (Cooper 2002). It appears then that Shetland must depend on its oldest industry, fishing, to secure its long-term future.

One of Shetlands' most important fishing industry support mechanisms, the system of quota leasing, whereby quotas are provided to local fishermen on preferential terms, has recently been ruled illegal by the EU Commission. This system is seen to breach the EU's common market rules as set out in the Treaty of Rome. In response to this ruling, Brian Isbister, the Chief Executive of the Shetland Fisheries Producers' Organisation (SFPO), which administers the track record for the Shetland Development Trust and the Shetland Leasing and Property Company (SLAP), said that the Commission had 'completely disregarded' the fact that the scheme was organised by the local community out of its own funds' (*Fishing News* 13/6/03: 1).

Shetland's decision to support the fishing industry has meant that, unlike the three other cases, it has not established a comprehensive economic plan for the non-fisheries sector. It is true that Shetland Island Council (SIC), in partnership with Shetland Enterprise, provides loans and grants to small businesses (Leask 2002), which do not have to be linked to fisheries. It is also true that a Local Economic Forum, chaired by Shetland Enterprise, exists to transmit information from local business representatives to the Council about their needs (Cooper 2002), irrespective of their connection to the fishing industry. Nevertheless, Shetland's policy towards the non-fisheries sector has been largely laissez-faire rather than interventionist.

However, this policy may have to change, as the Scottish Executive issues more demands for local economic diversification. Significantly, the SIC Development Department's Annual Report for 2000/2001 acknowledges the council's wish to become more 'pro-active' in promoting comprehensive economic development in the Islands (SIC 2003). Steps to improve transport and communication links (including an air service between the islands to encourage more tourism, and broadband internet access to attract IT businesses) could form part of that pro-active strategy in the future (Irvine 2002). Recent initiatives include 'improved marketing aimed at increasing the number of tourists attracted by birdlife', whale watching and folk festivals (SESR 2002: 88).

2) Peterhead

First, Peterhead's dependence on fisheries is the second highest of the four communities. Peterhead is the largest town in Aberdeenshire, with a falling population of 17,494 residents (AC 2002) and a low rate of unemployment (3.0% in March 2002). The main sources of jobs are distribution/hotels/restaurants (27% of the working population; manufacturing (24%); and public

services (22%). The fisheries sector directly employs 14% of the working population, while 28% of all jobs are in fishing/fishing-related industries, including ship repair and distribution (Thomson 2002). In 1999, the town derived 7.8% of its income from the catching sector, and 4.9% from fish processing.

However, in recent years, decommissioning has resulted in a 40% reduction in fleet size, and there are now only about 300 vessels licensed at the port. This reduction has been most dramatic for cod fishing boats – from 630 vessels in 1997 to 130 in 2002 (Alderson and Day 2002: 9). Moreover, the Peterhead fleet is an ageing one, with most vessels built between 1976 and 1980. The number of fishers fell from 777 in 1996 to 638 in 2000; the total volume of fish landed at Peterhead fell from 124k tonnes in 1995 to 88k tonnes in 2000; and the value of landings, after increasing from £73 million in 1995 to £83 million in 1998, fell to £71 million in 2000 and to £65 million in 2002 (*Fishing News* 18/7/03: 8), though pelagic landings in the first quarter of 2003 were up on the equivalent period in 2002 (*Fishing News* 21/3/03: 10). In 2002, a large fish processing firm, Albert Fisher, which employed 700 staff, went into receivership.

Nevertheless, despite these declines, Peterhead remains a major fishing community, with 29% of total fish landings in Scotland by weight in 2001 (AC 2001), and its fish market is still the largest in the UK, and has been for the last 15 years (Walker 2002). Indeed, Russell Foreman (2002) of Peterhead Fishermen Ltd, claims that fishing has never been more important to the town, because of the ‘phenomenal’ number of jobs that depend indirectly on the fishing industry, including those in shops, restaurants and bars

Second, Peterhead’s strategy for economic development reflects its pronounced dependence on the fishing industry. In the view of Aberdeenshire County Council (ACC), the development of fisheries in Peterhead is of paramount importance (Bell 2002). Faced with structural decline in the industry, in 1998, the Aberdeen Towns Partnership (ATP), an association of Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Homes and Scottish Enterprise Grampian, commissioned an economic analysis of Peterhead’s future. This exercise produced a wide-ranging regeneration strategy, ‘Peterhead 2001’, now known as the Peterhead Project, the principal aim of which is to promote Peterhead as Europe’s premier whitefish port (Harper 2002). The Project’s predicted cost is £6.85 million, and it includes major improvements to the town’s fishing infrastructure, including the harbour facilities.

Peterhead’s fishing industry has also benefited from the heavy investment by Aberdeenshire County Council (ACC) in promoting the interests of northeast Scotland’s fishing industry. The work of Ann Bell, ACC’s Fisheries Economic Development Officer, is especially noteworthy, in encouraging dialogue between local authorities, industry representatives, officers of the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD), and scientists, and in lobbying at Westminster and Brussels. This work has been vital to the establishment of a number of partnerships, including the Northeast Fisheries Development Partnership, the North Sea Commission Fisheries Scotland Group, the North Sea Commission Fisheries Partnership (NSCFP) and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (Bell 2002). Of particular note is the pioneering role of the NSCFP in bringing together fishers and scientists, in an attempt to overcome the structural divide between them, which presently excludes fishers from any direct influence over fish stock assessments and quotas.

However, unlike Shetland, Peterhead has not put all its eggs into the one basket of the fishing industry. It has recognised that the future of the fishing industry is precarious; that the local prison and the large RAF base are faced with closure, along with one of the large oil servicing companies which is planning to move to Aberdeen (Harper 2002); and that the Scottish Executive is pressing it to promote economic diversification by encouraging small business start-ups and high quality business support services. Accordingly, the Peterhead Project contains a second string to its bow – diversification of the economic base – with 18 recommendations for improvements to the built environment; the approaches to the town; the housing stock; commercial premises; business services; the retail sector; the town’s heritage potential; and tourist attractions (ATP 2003). Other agency initiatives include offshore technologies, supply chain facilities, call centre and back office operations (SESR 2002: 87). But not all these initiatives have been plain sailing. Peterhead has experienced limitations placed upon its capacity to enact diversification policies because key powers in relation to new businesses start-ups belonged to other agents, such as the Enterprise North East Trust and the Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Local Economic Forum (Harper 2002).

Peterhead's tourism industry is distinctly underdeveloped. The main tourist attractions, some of which are linked to the fishing industry, are limited to the £1.3m Maritime Heritage Centre, the Ugie Fish House, the Arbuthnot Museum and the Peterhead Bay Marina. The town's 'out of the way' location; its lack of a tourist information centre; the absence of high quality hotels and restaurants; poor advertising, and an 'image problem' deriving from unsympathetic media stories about drug abuse and bad weather, means that visitors are relatively few. However within Peterhead there are moves to capitalise upon the imagery, history and experience of fishing in order to produce a 'virtual' fishing industry that can be readily marketed to, and consumed by, visitors.

One tourist issue that Peterhead has yet to resolve, involves the fish market. The owners of the fish market are in dispute with ACC over allowing visitors to watch the trading. Because of supermarket fears that tourists might unwittingly contaminate the fish on sale, the owners sought a ban on their attendance. The Council, however, wish to welcome visitors to the market as part of their strategy to promote the port as a tourist attraction (Patterson 2002). This is an important issue that once resolved will indicate the particular path Peterhead wishes to follow in the future – will it prioritise the virtual or the real fishing industry? . Furthermore this issue highlights the tension between virtual and real dependency - will preferring the imitation harm the genuine?

3) North Shields

First, the degree of fisheries dependence in North Shields is economically (if not culturally) much less than either Shetland or Peterhead. Of its 9,504 inhabitants, there is an estimated labour force of 5,520, and in April 2002, the unemployment rate was 4.2% and falling. The fishing fleet contracted from 159 vessels in 1994 to 79 vessels in 2000 (DEFRA 2000), and further rounds of decommissioning have been taking place (Casson 2002). An ageing fleet dominates the industry, with the majority of boats built between 1986 and 1993. The number of active fishers has fallen to about 70 (Casson 2002), and the total tonnage of fish landed fell from 3578 in 1996 to 2361 in 2000, nearly all of the decline being of demersal fish, especially cod (DEFRA 2000). Only 10% of fish landed is from the local fleet (Taylor 2002). According to Hume (2002), without Scottish vessels landing fish at the market, it would have to close during the winter (cf Casson 2002). So, unlike in Shetland, the local North Shields fleet is not crucial to the fish-related businesses on shore; it is the continued use of the port that is vital.

On the other hand, North Shields has become the most important port in England and Wales for nephrops, with annual landings of all shellfish now exceeding 1,100 tonnes, valued at over £1.6 million (NTT 2002). Moreover, fisheries-related industries employ 525 workers, mainly in processing (NTC 2002), and eight successful processors are in negotiations with the town council to establish a designated fish processing park that would lead to increased processing capacity and more business from supermarket clients (Austin 2002).

Second, in North Shields' economic strategy, the fishing industry is exploited as much for its symbolic or cultural significance as for its direct economic importance. In the town's comprehensive regeneration plan – aptly named the Fish Quay Regeneration Strategy (FQRS) – the fishing industry is used as a means to 'brand' the community for tourist purposes, rather than as a source of primary employment (NTC 2002). It is true that in the FQRS there is much emphasis on supporting the fishing industry, by, for example, creating a purpose built fish processors' park by establishing a Regional Business Cluster team to negotiate with local processors over the location of the proposed processing park (Hume 2002); helping local processors to meet the hygiene standards of large supermarket chains (Austin 2002); establishing a National Fish Filleting school in 2002 to remedy the fish skills shortage (funding for which was obtained from Jobcentre Plus and the Fish Filleters' Association (ONE 2002)); and accessing funds from the government's Fishing Communities Regeneration Initiative through One North East (ONE) to help fishers to put together business plans and gain marketing advice. Local agents have demonstrated considerable capacity to access these external funds.

But these steps must also be seen in the context of the overall aim of the FQRS, in which the fishing industry is set within the wider aim of economic diversification, using fishing as the unifying motif. This is a form of image-making – a makeover of the town's historical fishing identity. In the FQRS, which was produced after extensive consultation with residents and representatives from both the public and private sectors, the objective is to develop the local economy and to enhance the quality of the residential community, by refurbishing the built environment, improving transport and parking, expanding the evening economy, encouraging local artistic and cultural industries, and above all,

creating a distinctive fish quay image. Significantly, one initiative in the FQRS was to promote the notion of a premium North Shields Fish Quay ‘brand’ that local processors could use to market their products. Also, the annual Fish Quay Festival is designed both to exemplify and promote the fishing identity of North Shields. The mission is to create an attractive cosmopolitan community with a thriving multi-faceted economy based on business, media, culture, tourism and a working fish port. Within this mission, the fishing industry would assume an iconic status - a source of local pride in the town’s long fishing heritage.

3) Lowestoft

First, the extent of Lowestoft’s fisheries-dependence is the lowest of all the four cases. Lowestoft has a population of 55,280 (50% of Waveney’s population), and hosts a diverse economy, featuring offshore oil and gas, food processing (the largest individual employer is Birds Eye Walls, providing 1,600 jobs), electronics, engineering, joinery and customer service industries (Blizzard 2002). However, as in the other three cases, fisheries activity has declined sharply in Lowestoft. About 10% of the population are employed in the fishing/fishing related industry, but in 2001 only about 114 full time fishers worked in the town (Sims 2002), a figure that will almost certainly have fallen with the recent closure of Colne Fishing Ltd, the main deep-sea trawler company, leaving only the inshore fleet operational. The heyday of fishing at Lowestoft was in the 1930s, when it was a major herring port, and ‘maybe 75% of the local economy was based on fish’ (BBC 2002). Then, 3000 vessels comprised the East Anglian herring fleet, many of which operated from Lowestoft (WDC 2002). The fleet is now much smaller, and is still shrinking: in 1994, there were 231 vessels over 10m. in length; in 2002 there were only 110 (DEFRA 1996, 2000). Fish landings have also fallen in recent years. In 2000, 3,973 tonnes of fish were landed at Lowestoft, which was 43% less than in 1995 (DEFRA 1995, 2000). Plaice dominates landings by weight, but the quantity of plaice landed nearly halved between 1995 (4,478 tonnes) and 2000 (2,541 tonnes). Fish processing currently employs about 170 workers in 22 firms in the Harbour ward of the town, but, as Hugh Sims (2002) of the Lowestoft Fish Processors’ Organisation pointed out, the fish that are processed and marketed are mainly landed by non-resident vessels.

Second, the economic strategy adopted by Lowestoft to deal with the fishing downturn reflects the relatively small significance of fisheries in the town, in that the strategy explicitly focuses on developing the non-fisheries sector and a resignation that the fishing industry will never again become economically significant. As Sims (2002) notes, there is no belief in a rebirth of the fishing industry in Lowestoft. In a two-pronged approach, funds from Waveney District Council’s Economic Regeneration Unit (ERU) have been used, first, to assist the most impoverished wards in the town; and, second, to support diversification of the economic base. An example of the former approach is the Kirkley Regeneration Initiative (funded also from the government’s Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)), as a result of which a Community Resource Centre was established, to provide IT training facilities, a gym, a bistro and meeting rooms, along with job creation schemes (Fisk 2002). Examples of the latter approach (economic diversification) include the Lowestoft Town Centre Regeneration Project and the North Lowestoft Heritage and Economic Regeneration Scheme, both of which are partnerships designed to revitalise the town, by improving roads, parking, public spaces, street lighting and heritage sites, thereby encouraging new businesses to locate in the urban area. One component of these initiatives was the £3.6m plan to develop a derelict canning plant on the quayside into a modern Riverside Business Park (EEDA 2002).

With regard to the fishing industry, the ERU has had more limited involvement. First, it has provided the industry with a small, yet invaluable, amount of direct support. For example, the Lowestoft Fisheries Project (LFP), which was financed by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA), was established to address the recruitment problems of the industry by funding a new training programme at the local college, and by providing loans for new recruits to purchase essential fishing equipment. Significantly, however, the LFP was only established after the local MP for Waveney, Bob Blizzard, pressed the ERU to enter into discussions with local fishers, who had previously failed to make any headway with the ERU. Moreover, the LFP only ran for five months. Second, the ERU has focused on creating opportunities for employment outside the fishing industry for ex-fishers. For example, in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, the ERU established a Fisheries Task Force to find alternative employment for fishers who had been made redundant. Also, a Community Support Initiative was funded, using community development officers to link up with the voluntary sector to

help ex-fishers find new interests and roles outside the fishing industry (WDC 2001). But these were relatively modest initiatives.

More significantly, like North Shields, Lowestoft has sought to exploit its fishing past to encourage tourism. Tourism has traditionally existed alongside the fishing industry ever since Lowestoft was developed as a holiday resort in the late 1880s, when Samuel Morton Peto built the harbour (Lowestoft 2002). Lowestoft has recently sought to capitalise on this heritage by, for example, creating the new East Point Pavilion Centre which features the 'Lowestoft Story', an interactive exhibition, describing the evolution of the town's fishing industry (EG 2002). Another tourist attraction with a fishing motif is the annual East Coast Regatta, which incorporates displays of classic fishing vessels, lifeboats and tours of old trawlers (ECF 2002). Also there is the Lowestoft Fish Fayre, while the development of the yacht marina, partly financed by EU Objective 5 funds, is a tourist draw with (admittedly diluted) fishing connections. For the community of Lowestoft the actual fishing industry is incidental, but the concept of a fishing industry is hugely valuable, especially to the tourism industry. Within Lowestoft capturing and selling the idea of fishing is far more viable than actually catching and selling fish.

Conclusions

Four conclusions emerge from this comparative analysis of four 'fisheries-dependent' communities on the east coast of Britain.

First, although these communities are feeling the difficulties that are currently plaguing the fishing industry, there is clear political and economic commitment within heavily fisheries-dependent communities to support the industry and help it succeed. Within such communities the policy makers have the firm belief, perhaps a forced belief, that their local fishing industry will ride out the current troubled times and emerge leaner but stronger. In fact as Nuttall (2000: 108) explains, some fisheries-dependent communities have sought to capitalise upon their difficulties as 'images and representations of traditional communities are deployed within political, economic and discursive contexts to defend interests and gain a degree of control over resource management'.

Second, perhaps unsurprisingly the 'coping' strategies adopted by the community generally reflect the degree of fisheries-dependency within the community. For example, the greater the perceived dependence, the greater the likelihood is that the community will choose to support the fishing industry rather than economic diversification within the employed 'coping' strategy. Some commentators are, however, heavily critical of such a strategy. For example, Symes (2000: 8) argues that 'The prospects for maintaining, let alone expanding, employment within the fisheries sector – except for aquaculture development – are infinitesimal...Opportunities for the sustainable development of many fisheries dependent regions will therefore rely on 'diversification'...rather than the expansion of the fishing industry' (cf. SESR 2002: 15). Moreover, in a report for the Scottish Executive (Thomson 2002: 7), it is confidently stated that in the long term, such economic diversification will be successful. But, as we have seen, other commentators claim that the inshore sector can hold its own economically, provided it is given adequate support. Moreover, there may be little or no prospect of diversification in some areas, as SAC (1999b: 169) pointed out.

Third, there is an increasing tendency for fisheries-dependent communities to find ways of marrying, rather than choosing between, the two objectives – fisheries and diversification. One important way of marrying them is to promote diversification *within* the fishing industry – for example by encouraging new forms of fishing activity, such as aquaculture of novel species, and by expanding the scope of fish processing to include added-value niche products (SAC 1999b: 171).

Another important way of marrying the interests of fishing with economic diversification is through tourism, whereby the community exploits its fishing heritage for the purpose of attracting visitors. A striking example of this strategy is Ireland's Fishing Fleet Development Programme, which is designed to encourage fishers to use their vessels not for catching commercial fish, but for sea angling (eg catch and release bluefin tuna); scuba diving; and wildlife observation (eg dolphin watching) (*Fishing News* 10/5/02: 3). Less active tourists can be attracted to fish heritage sites. In Scotland, as Nadel-Klein (2000: 363) points out, 'even where fishing has ceased to be a primary resource base, the idea of fishing "heritage" remains a potential source of income. A number of the smaller east coast communities now depend upon tourism and touristic representations of the fisher past as much as, if not more so, than they do upon the fishery itself'.

This strategy suggests that we can distinguish between two conceptions of fisheries-dependent communities – ‘real’ and ‘virtual’. ‘Real’ dependency is product-based, and reflects the major place occupied in communities such as Shetland by the fishing and fishing-related industries. By contrast, ‘virtual’ dependency is image-based, and reflects the *idea* of a fishing industry in a community, where it serves as an icon and branding mechanism, to encourage both the tourist industry and niche markets for fish products. Moreover, the value of such ‘virtual’ dependency may transcend purely economic considerations, as Carl Suddaby, skipper of a Hornsea potter explains: ‘If I had a pound for every person who had stopped to look at my boat arriving on the beach, I would be a rich man. This sector provides the coastal towns and communities with an identity as well as an economy’ (*Fishing News* 4&11/1/02: 4). It is on the basis of these two different conceptions of fisheries-dependency that Shetland, and to a lesser extent, Peterhead, have invested heavily in the ‘reality’ of fishing; whereas North Shields, and to a lesser extent, Lowestoft, have invested in the ‘virtuality’ of fishing.

However, there is some controversy over the issue of fisheries-related tourism. For instance, it has been argued that exploiting the tourist value of fishing destroys the identity of fisheries-dependent communities. ‘Many feel that it would ruin the special characteristics; that the authenticity would be lost. It is even claimed that the tourism industry would reduce the coastal culture to a caricature of itself. There is a danger of devaluation through commercialisation. The value of culture is...reduced the moment a price is set on it’ (Jentoft 1993: 93). Moreover, there is a risk of tourism replacing, rather than celebrating, fishing. Moniz et al (2000: 150) give the example of Peniche in Portugal, where ‘The cultural heritage of the fisheries is being eroded and tourism is gradually taking over some of the places traditionally occupied by the fishing industry: former fish warehouses, for example, are being converted into restaurants, night clubs and bars’. And, according to SAC (1999b: 169), tourism ‘is likely only to be able to provide relatively low paid and seasonal employment’. Harm to the individual produced through the supplanting of fishing by tourism may be more than just the economic harm brought about through low paid jobs. The harm to the individual’s identity, social status and perceived role within the community may also occur. How will an ex-fisher, for example, adjust to a life of taking day-trippers out to look at seals?

Fourth, within a community that features a more ‘virtual’ dependency on fishing we assume that there will necessarily be a process of restructuring within that community. A virtual fishing industry may preserve for the community the idea and legacy of fishing but it will not preserve the community as it was when the real fishing industry dominated the economy. Traditional roles, routines and social positions derived from the fishing industry will be lost as the economy is redirected towards tourism and other competing industries. In communities such as these, the real fishing industry may fade away but the fable of fishing will live on.

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