

Why the Coast Matters for Women: A Feminist Approach to Research on Fishing Communities

MARILYN PORTER*

Department of Sociology, Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador A1C 2Z1, Canada.

Abstract

Issues of gender are neglected in fisheries research and issues of fisheries are also neglected in feminist research. These twin omissions hamper our efforts to understand women's experiences in coastal and fishing communities. This paper addresses the problem that policy is often directed narrowly at improving fish harvesting and processing, without taking account of its impact on women, families and the community. The paper makes use of data from studies in two countries in different regions, Tanzania and Atlantic Canada, to illustrate how a feminist approach can uncover unequal gender relations of power and inequality in fishing communities and how these are integrated and justified in political, cultural and social structures. To overcome the limitations of small scale, context specific studies of women in coastal or fishing communities, we need to develop common frames, focusing on power, inequality and discrimination and, more positively, the ways in which women negotiate a better position for themselves and their families.

Introduction

At the 2nd Global Symposium on Gender and Fisheries, Meryl Williams argued for the necessity of applying a gender lens to both define fisheries issues and to provide a better basis for action. While men dominate in the harvesting sector of fisheries, women are usually the majority of workers in fisheries services and post harvest sectors. Male based fisheries research tends to focus on "fish stocks, their production and directly related knowledge", whereas a gender lens describes the complete fish harvest and supply chain (Williams, 2008). On the other side of the same problem, in the special issue of *Development* (2008) Wendy Harcourt pointed to the continuing neglect of issues of women and the environment and, *a fortiori*, of women and fisheries in mainstream feminist discussions. Bemoaning the collapse in constructive feminist thinking since the high point of the Planeta Femea at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, she called for a "new political ecology". These two writers have identified key objectives in discussions about gender and fisheries. One of these is the problem of integrating a serious consideration of gender issues into discussions, especially policy discussions, about fisheries and aquaculture; the other is the problem of the neglect of fisheries and aquaculture issues, and more

*Corresponding author. E-mail address: mporter2008@gmail.com.

generally, natural resource management, especially at a conceptual level, in feminist discussions, and therefore a failure to develop an appropriate theoretical basis for discussions about women in fishing and coastal communities.

Despite vigorous feminist efforts, gender and more particularly women's issues are still often ignored in aquaculture and fishery literature and natural resource issues are still usually ignored in feminist debates.¹ The literature on fisheries is still dominated by "hard science" reports and explorations. In very few of these studies do we find recognition that behind the hand that fishes there lies a fully social person (usually male) and behind him, a family and a community (which includes women and children as well as men). Each of these communities is situated within a specific social, political, cultural, geographic, religious context. All the people within that community are also structured by ethnicity, age, sex and a number of other factors. It is not just gender that is ignored in such science-based accounts but all social factors. This does not weaken the science, but it does have a negative impact on the policy implications of such studies and it leads to persistent misunderstandings of the way in which women are located in multiple social, economic, and cultural structures. While the body of feminist literature is growing rapidly, there are few signs that it is being seriously integrated at the policy level.

Another weakness in the current state of research lies in the way in which many researchers carry out very specific local studies, but then their studies are generalised as if all women experienced the same situation in all fisheries. There are real distinctions between the way in which women live on large lakes (e.g. Lake Victoria and the lakes in Mali), the ways in which women participate in aquaculture either close to larger bodies of water or some distance from them, and women who live in marine coastal regions. To start from the fish and the ways of capturing and processing them is to miss the significant differences in the circumstances in which women build their lives. In the process of "tacking on" considerations of gender to fishery concerns means that there is a tendency to conflate "coastal" with rural. Many fishing communities are the poor, rural and isolated communities of the stereotype. Yet there are often fishing communities within or just outside large cities (e.g. Bombay and Calcutta) and in northern countries the fishing industries have often become centralised into large ports with associated fish processing plants (e.g. Bergen in Norway, Victoria in Canada and Peterhead in Scotland). Such an "adding on" approach to gender is usually quite incapable of noticing and integrating social, cultural, economic and political factors into an understanding of how women actually live in such communities.

On the other side of the coin, gender and fisheries are still sidelined in feminist discussions except in specialist fora. For example, there were some 132 papers presented at the 2nd Congress of the Asian Association of Women's Studies in December 2010. Held in Penang, at the centre of

¹ For example in Janet Momsen's recent (2010) and otherwise excellent update of her 2004 *Gender and Development* work, fisheries gets only the most passing mention, and then in terms of women's limited access to the more lucrative forms of harvesting. Signs of change for the better can be found in the recent review of the literature on gender and fisheries produced by the International Collective of Fishworkers (Biswas, 2011), in the arguments for integrating gender and fisheries in Macdonald (2005), and in such earlier lone voices as Harrison (1995).

considerable interest in fishery research, there was one paper on the role of women in alternative agriculture development, one on land rights among the Minangkabau and just one on a fishery related issue: how the quality of group relationships influences empowerment among members of a fishermen's wives association in Malaysia. Even more recently, the Women's Worlds conference in Ottawa in July 2011 had fewer than half a dozen sessions, out of more than 300, devoted to any aspect of natural resources and their management.

The strong tendency in contemporary feminist thinking towards (broadly defined) post-modern approaches contributes to this exclusion. Post-modernism challenges the assumed certainty of scientific (and social scientific) efforts to explain reality, insisting that general explanations are invalid; only relative, or interpretive, truths are available to us. Post-modern and post-colonial authors have been useful in challenging the kinds of "totalizing" or comprehensive accounts that have historically dominated both scientific and social scientific analysis, which have led to privileged groups (e.g. men, the rich and powerful, governments) presenting their perspective as the only legitimate one, and thus excluding the equally legitimate views of the less powerful. But postmodernism's challenge to this traditional thinking has too often led to situations of perpetual philosophical doubt rather than to ways of thinking that would allow practical solutions to actual problems. There is a general post-modern tendency to focus on abstractions such as "signs", "signifiers", and "symbols", rather than on the nitty gritty of lived experience, or on the concrete issues that affect so many women such as the changing patterns of ownership and control in fisheries, the collapse of fish stocks, and the impact of that on fishing households and other major structural changes.

Within the more enlightened fishery studies, we find efforts to supply some gender specific data. Mostly this is a form of the old formula of "add women and stir" (Oakley, 1972). But if women and their experiences are not central to the analysis it risks simply adding a layer of "thin" descriptions, without interrogating the social contexts in which women live, and thereby deepening the analysis. We need to do more than that and, as Williams (2008) indicated, start by looking through a "gender lens", recognising that if we change the perspective, we change what we look at, how we interpret it and how we address the issues it raised. There is now a body of writers within the relatively confined orbit of specialists in aspects of gender and aquaculture and fisheries who have begun the exploration of the neglect of gender, usually by drawing attention to the contribution of women to aquaculture and fisheries activities (e.g. Medard, 1995; Hapke and Ayyankeril, 2004; Frangoudes and Keromnes, 2005; Faustine, 2007). Each study and each article points in more or less the same direction, but we are not yet equipped with an overall understanding of gender and fisheries, or the ways in which globalisation, climate change and other macro processes impact on women. With such a small data resource, usually from studies with very specific framings and focus, it is also difficult to make any appropriate comparative conclusions. While we are so short of studies that focus on the speed and profound nature of the consequences for women brought about by economic and social changes, we find it difficult to connect the local situations with the more structural and global accounts of macro processes. There is, I believe, no short cut to developing a

framework in which we can examine the interconnectedness as well as the specificity with which such changes play out in the lives women live in their social, cultural and economic specificity.

Every study has a different focus, depending on the theoretical and substantive interests of the researcher. How women are located in different social, cultural and economic contexts, how those contexts interact with different fisheries, and how women negotiate their agency are multiple and complex. Among the different approaches feminists have used, comparative methodology is especially relevant. Mostly such researchers have based their research on the quantitative analysis of very large data sets (Bennett, 2005; Williams, 2008; Biswas, 2011; MEP, 2011). This provides us with an effective overview and the basis for analysis, especially at the level of policy. However, feminist analysis also needs to probe behind the picture at the macro level to explore the lived experience behind the statistics. Traditional anthropological and sociological approaches have carried out intensive fieldwork in particular locations and situations. The data and analysis produced by such small scale studies is very rich, but it is hard to relate such studies to each other and thus develop our analysis. In this paper, I have tried to broaden the qualitative approach by drawing data from two very different locations while approaching each set of data with the same questions and overall framework. By doing this I hope to begin the work of connecting the insights of the particular with macro level analysis. Through the examples that follow I want to suggest that awareness of how dimensions of power, inequality and discrimination are affecting women and their responses should be at the core of feminist understandings of coastal women and their experiences. I suggest that by drawing attention to exactly how changes in the pursuit of marine resources are constructed in different situations, we can obtain a greater understanding of how gender is one (very important but not exclusive) dimension in how power, culture and economy interact. This paper also offers a starting point for thinking about how we can develop systematic and rigorous approaches that work at the level of small scale studies of women in fishing communities.

The situations of women in Atlantic Canada and coastal Tanzanian fishing communities appear very different. Yet both examples show us how women's position in a fishery is defined culturally and politically. They illustrate the unintended consequences for women of changes in fishery policies or the decline of the stock, and they show women not as passive shadows behind men's activities but as active agents negotiating within the limitations of their cultural and economic contexts and resisting the inequality they face.

An example from Tanzania

The Kilwa region of Tanzania is home to the most productive fishery in the country, but it is also the poorest, with the lowest education, health and transport resources in Tanzania (Government of Tanzania, 2002; WWF, 2005; TCMP, 2003; Mascarenhas, 2007). In previous work, my colleagues and I showed how women's relationship to the fishery was quite different to that of men (Porter et al. 2008; Porter and Mbezi, 2010). While men dominated the high value harvesting of fin fish, women marketed and processed such fish as they could obtain from the boats as they landed (Mwaipopo, 2008). Most high value fish was shipped directly to Dares Salaam by middlemen. Women's move into seaweed harvesting was initially successful (Msuya, 2006), and while it was seen as profitable men also began seaweed farming, although women remained dominant. In recent years the seaweed, especially on the previously rich Songosongo farms, has suffered bleaching and is no longer commercially viable, although some women continue farming because any income is better than none. Octopus also provided women with a role as harvesters of a valuable stock. But as the prices for octopus rose, men began to dive in deeper water, and thus sidelined women's activities (Mbezi, 2009). The fisheries development projects with which I was associated focused almost exclusively on improving fish harvesting and processing methods so as to increase the value of the product and thus the economic rewards of the fishers. But the fishers in question were usually (although not always) male. Both the fishery scientists and the policy makers assumed that improving male wages would automatically improve the livelihoods of poor fishing families. It is this false deduction I want to draw attention to here, because it is such a common way of thinking in policy oriented fishery research.

In the Somanga and Songosongo districts of Kilwa our research demonstrated that while men were focused on fishing activities, women combined their much less profitable fishing activities with other kinds of income generating and subsistence work to enable the household to survive (Porter et al. 2008). The women in Somanga, on the coast, could collect sea cucumber and catch shrimp using mosquito nets in shallow water. Otherwise their fishery efforts were confined to marketing such fish as they could obtain, as well as frying and selling fish in the market place. On Songosongo Island, women were engaged in seaweed farming and octopus collection, although both these activities were increasingly less profitable. It was clear from the studies that women's economic involvement in the fishery was not enough to sustain a family. The fact that so many women were also involved in non-fishery economic activities (including small scale production of maize and other crops, coconut trees, raising poultry, making salt, and collecting sea shells) but remained extremely poor, drew our attention to the failure of men's increased income to improve the household prosperity. In both the communities we studied the most lucrative fisheries were in the hands of men, with women's incomes from marine-related activities barely sufficient to cover household needs. Our study revealed that there was a discrepancy between men's incomes from fishing and other sources and what was available to women for their families. This raised the question of why households continued to be so poor despite efforts to increase income from fishing (Masawe, 2008).

The coastal region of Tanzania is a Muslim area. This had specific consequences for how families operated and, indeed, for how households were constructed, especially as polygamy was practised. In investigating how far the practice of polygamy contributed to the poverty of households, we found that households were constructed in several ways, including polygamy, but nearly all resulted in women living in what were effectively women-headed households without male support. Alerted to the far greater number of effectively women-headed households, we dug further into how such households managed economically and what the connection was with men's income. In our study we found relatively small differences between the situation of women in polygamous, *de jure* monogamous, and female-headed households (single, widowed or divorced). They were all, economically, woman-headed households.

It is, of course, difficult to arrive at any accurate assessment of either men's sexual practices or the impact on the household of their informal arrangements. It is estimated that approximately 20% of marriages in Somanga and 10% of marriages in Songosongo are formally polygamous, although this is certainly an underestimate. Government statistics, especially the census, allow people to declare themselves married (monogamously or polygamously), single, divorced, or widowed. But many women will define themselves as divorced if their husband takes another wife. She may also be divorced if the husband follows the route of serial monogamy, which under the sharia law simply requires the husband to declare divorce. Even if a woman is married and her husband has not taken another wife, it is more than probable that he will take a mistress or, more often, a series of mistresses (known locally as concubines). In this case, the woman's situation is often worse than that of a polygamous wife, with fewer rights and even less certainty. Finally, she may be widowed. In a time of increased HIV infections this is an even greater likelihood. One indication of the scale of the problem is that 14% of households were recorded as headed by children under the age of 14, orphaned as a result of AIDS (Mbezi, 2009).

In terms of the economic standing of the household, the actual form of the household does not matter. Whether a woman is married to an unfaithful husband, is one of several wives, is divorced (*de jure* or *de facto*), or widowed, she is essentially the sole support of herself and any dependent children or parents. Despite the Quranic injunction that men must treat all their wives equally, feminists and others have long argued that it is impossible to ensure equal treatment of more than one wife, and poor fishermen can clearly not provide adequate support for one wife, never mind several. In practice, in Somanga and Songosongo, there are no sanctions against men who do not support their wife or wives and no way for women to claim their shares either during or after a marriage. Essentially men could make whatever arrangements suited them, and women, wives or not, must make the best of it.

In most polygamous households, wives live in separate houses (at some distance from each other) with their biological children so as to avoid domestic conflicts with other wives. In practice, wives in most cases live in a state of semi-conflict and competition over the household scarce resources: land, condiments such as tiny pieces of fish, meat and vegetables that add flavour to

cereals, money, and even the husbands' favour. Husbands in polygamous households visit their wives in turn and usually spend 2-3 days each week in each house. Husbands do not have a permanent dwelling and are supposed to supply essential needs to each wife in each household. In poor fishing communities most men are simply too poor to fulfil this obligation for several wives, even if they wished to. As one polygamous wife put it: "Nowadays women cannot dare to wait for their husbands to provide each and everything in the house as sometimes they get very little fish to sustain a house. That is why I am currently engaging in different petty businesses and I always provide for my house so I do not depend on him entirely. People sell even green vegetables. That is why we are really busy looking for cash income and at the same time making sure that other things in the households such as cooking, fetching water are also done properly".

Sometimes even married men admitted that if it was not for their wives' income-generating activities, life would have been very difficult. For instance one polygamously married man admitted: "My wives helped me a lot indeed. I do not know what I would do with three wives I married if they would have been depending on me entirely. I remember last *bamvua* (spring tide) I got no fish to sell but thank God my wives are working too and are able to take care of my homes often".

Because husbands in most polygamous households had no permanent dwelling, women in those households were forced to do most of the things socially expected to be done by (male) heads of households. One polygamous wife said: "My situation has no big difference with the one who is not married - we are three (wives) and our husband spends two days for each one of us. So I and the children see him at most two days a week. If anything happens within the days he is not supposed to be in your home you have to solve the problem on your own. He can give you some advice but at the end of the day it is your problem".

Many polygamous wives will describe themselves as "divorced" on official forms because they know that effectively they are on their own: "Last week our child, who is in the secondary school, was sent back home because the school fees (was unpaid). Our husband spends three days in each house. It was my co-wife's turn, so my husband was at my co-wife's house at Miteja. It is far from here. I went there and told him about that and he told me to find ways so that the child could go back to school. I therefore had to give her the savings from my petty businesses. That is why I sometimes do not consider myself being married. There are so many things I do and decide on my own. For instance I am the one who has to think of what we will eat and in most cases I have to find the means to get what I and my children will eat especially during the days my husband goes to my co-wife or shifts to other fishing grounds".

But these *de facto* female-headed households, in which the male partner is effectively absent, are often invisible in the planning context. Very often husbands are still considered to be heads of households and wives are perceived as dependants even if for most of their married life the wives have primary, if not total, responsibility for the financial and organisational aspects of their households (TGNP, 2005; REPOA, 2006). One recent example in Somanga occurred when the

Rural Integrated Project Support (RIPS) project gave goats to several households on condition that they distributed newly born goats to other households. Being considered heads of households, husbands were the custodians of the distributed goats. Naturally this was a source of conflict in polygamous marriages, not only about the ownership of the goats, but because husbands took the money their wives had earned from the sale of milk for their own personal use (including spending the money on drinking or on their concubines) or even gave it to another wife who had not taken care of the goats.

This kind of study, which looks at the actual economic and cultural situation of women, can challenge the current directions of fisheries policies and development projects aimed at increasing men's fishing income. It was clear from the Kilwa example that women were culturally constrained in their fishing activities. Women did not go out to sea in boats and were excluded from the most profitable fisheries. It was also clear that men were not fulfilling their obligations to the several households dependent on them. Nor was there any sign that increasing men's income would necessarily improve the situation. Most men had several households with conflicting claims on them, and no overarching allegiance to any one of them. Realistically, women had to depend on their own resources to feed and support their families. Development projects aimed at increasing women's income would be much more likely to alleviate poverty in those households. Research and policy need to look at how fishing and its rewards in Somanga and Songosongo are deeply embedded in structures of social and cultural power relationships.

An example from Atlantic Canada

A number of feminist studies in recent years have looked at the impact on coastal communities and the women in those communities after the collapse of the northern cod fishery in the northwest Atlantic. The Canadian Atlantic seaboard was not alone in experiencing a decline in marine resources, but the impact on coastal communities in Atlantic Canada, especially in Newfoundland and Labrador has been likened to the Great Depression of the 1930s. The decline in the cod fishery culminated in the Moratorium of 1992. The Moratorium effectively ended the inshore cod fishery that was the economic mainstay of most rural fishing communities. About 100,000 people directly or indirectly employed in the fishery were affected (Hamilton and Butler, 2001; Dolan, 2005; Ommer, 2007). The collapse in the early 1990s was not unforeseen. Many commentators linked it directly to the transformation of the fishery from a small scale coastal fishery to one dominated by large capitalist concerns. Barbara Neis and Susan Williams (1997) looked at the close connection between the rise of a neo-liberal ideology and the collapse of the fishery and its impact on women. As Martha MacDonald (2005) said: "Fisheries have long provided interesting vantage points from which to explore processes of capital accumulation and relations of class and gender".

Most of the studies based in Atlantic Canada have focused either on the macro social and economic effects of the crisis (e.g. in terms of out-migration, public sector cuts, health issues) or on the practical difficulties faced by women. For example, Marian Binkley (2002) studied how the wives of fishers in both the inshore and offshore fisheries had to juggle their time and energies to carry out various economic supportive roles, in most cases increasing their workload and their stress. Jane Robinson (1995) studied the uneven and unfair way in which the compensation packages were allocated among men and women affected by the closures.²

To uncover the deeper ramifications of the crisis, we need to move away from examining the specific impact on women's economic situation and look at the changes in cultural and political relations between men and women. Two examples are the works of Brenda Grzetic (2004) and Nicole Power (2005). Brenda Grzetic's work focused on how the changes in both government policies and the decline in the fishery brought more women into active fishing roles, usually working alongside their husbands in small, inshore boats. Nicole Power made her central concern the plight of men caught in a rapidly changing world that threatened their traditional masculine roles.

In both these cases we find women's traditional roles and sites of power fundamentally undermined by the macro changes in the economy. In Grzetic's work, we catch glimpses of women's concerns about the state of the fishery long before the collapse. Inshore fishers of both sexes had been sounding the warning about declining fish stocks for many years (Neis, 1992; Neis et al. 2005) but in Grzetic's work we find women naming the overly masculine and aggressive approach to the fishery, as exemplified by both the large companies operating the offshore draggers and the government policies that encouraged rapacious and competitive methods. As one informant, Gloria, remarked: "it was over-fished by the draggers. They're dragging up all the species in the area. The foreign boats have a by-catch that's bigger than the entire catch for this area...the ecosystem is ruined."

Cuts in the quotas and changes in regulations created a situation in which it made economic sense for women to take the place of (paid) male crew on their husbands' boats. As Grzetic (2004) wrote: "it also creates room for women to maneuver and negotiate in order to ensure their safety and survival in the inshore fishery. Women in fishing households have lived a strange doubly occupied space for decades where their fishery work onshore and aboard boats has been essential to the success of the small-boat fisheries, but invisible and uncompensated by governments and institutions. With the current wave of restructuring, they have once again stepped up their efforts to secure family incomes from fishing" with the numbers of women harvesters rising as more men are driven out of the fishery.

² Working in the 1980s on the history of women's work in fishing communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, I found that women's contribution to the fishery (especially in terms of drying the cod) was vital to the family income and that women were often the only members of the household to be paid in cash, e.g. for berries they picked and sold to the local merchant (Porter, 1983, 1985).

While many women welcomed the opportunity to work alongside their husbands and enjoyed being on the water, their entrance did not mean greater equality between male and female fishers. Sixty-five percent of women fishers were certified at the Apprentice level of professionalisation (the lowest) and only 2.2% of licence holders were women. They saw themselves as “helpers” and recognised that their main role was to help the household qualify for more EI (Employment Insurance). When women moved onto the boats, it did not mean any necessary decrease in their domestic and childcare responsibilities. Many of them described an impossible triple workload. In this sense, they joined the women, described by Binkley, in a ceaseless round of negotiating to increase their contribution to the household economy and at the same time maintaining it emotionally and socially.

Apart from women’s failure to enter the harvesting sector on anything like equal terms, they also posed a threat to the male fishers. As Grzetic (2004) put it, “Yet for all the efforts at co-operation and bonding, women’s very presence on fishing boats represents a constant displacement in the collective imagery about fishers, disrupting male-defined ideas about skill and place that are closely tied to gender”.

It is to these notions about masculinity and the fishery and the consequences for women that I now turn. Power (2005) started from the now accepted position that “development processes and economic restructuring impact women and men in different ways because they are differently and unequally located in local and global cultures and economies”. So far, so good; we have a growing number of studies that look at the immediate effects on women, including Neis et al. (2005).

What Power instead attempted was to look at the social and emotional (as well as economic) effects on men that then transfer to women (because of men’s great power in the household) as additional effects. In contrast to what she called “the uncritical, often self-indulgent, stance of men’s studies”, Power took a critical feminist perspective that described and challenged ‘hegemonic masculinity’. Rather than the supposed “masculinity crisis”, she preferred to examine the crisis in the fishery that created obstacles for “men to live their lives *as men* in culturally prescribed ways”, which as she suggested may have led them to question their identity as men and “engage in negative behavior”. As one might expect, such negative behaviour as excessive drinking or violent behaviour has significant impacts on the women with whom the men lived. There are, of course, many responses to downsizing, unemployment or the collapse of local employment, some of which suggests that men both have more opportunities to adapt, e.g. by commuting (Winson and Leach, 2002), and have ideological resources to develop what Connell (1998) has called “radical pragmatism”. However, most studies indicate that men react to challenges to their masculinity by defensively asserting a kind of hyper-masculinity. What Power describes in the Newfoundland situation is what she calls “the patriarchal dividend”, which is how men use their power as men to overcome the difficulties they face, with detrimental results for their families. As a result of either being displaced from the fishery or losing jobs in fish plants or fishery related jobs, men had greater freedom to move either for training or to look for other work. If a man does move, his expectation is

that his wife will either take the full load for the household at home in his absence, or up sticks and move to the husband's new location, often many thousands of miles away in another province.

Several studies have found that when women are laid off and spend time at home, it has a less dramatic effect on self image than when it happens to men (e.g. Morris, 1984). What it means for women is an intensification of their work, coupled with anxiety and stress about how the household will manage with fewer resources. Men clearly worry about this too, but the main burden of accommodating to the new situation falls on women. When Power carried out her fieldwork, most of the people she interviewed were about to be cut off from the compensation packages put in place immediately after the moratorium, thus intensifying the vulnerability of fishing households. "Because of their domestic responsibilities, such cuts to the household budget often meant new or intensified work and increased anxiety and heightened burdens for women. Since the moratorium women have had to reorganise inadequate household budgets and make do with less. As members of the household are cut off from compensation packages, this obviously becomes more difficult" (Power, 2005). Apart from the worry of meeting basic needs, women also felt that some money needed to be left in men's pockets so that they could sustain their "manly" activities such as drinking, buying tools and hunting. Power also suggested that such "pocket money" allowed women to get men out of the house for longer.

Safer places for "men to be men" included cutting wood for fuel, hunting and helping friends with household repairs and construction. What they did not do, or did very reluctantly, was increase their participation in child care and domestic tasks. Older men were more inclined to "help out" domestically, but this, too, was seen as a sign of their ageing and thus becoming less like "real men". Women tended to respond to the increased presence of their menfolk in the house both by working to provide "safe", i.e. masculine, tasks (like taking out the garbage) and trying to reinforce their husband's superior "masculine" role any way they could. Far from enhancing equality between men and women in fishing households, the crisis appears to have reinforced and even intensified existing sexual divisions of labour.

The women in Binkley's study found that the extra time their husbands were at home as a result of the collapse of the fishery particularly trying (Binkley, 2002). They were "under my feet" and prevented women from their usual efficient ways of carrying out domestic tasks. Men were also "needy" and women felt they had to take extra measures to ensure their masculine pride was maintained. Power (2005) found the same. Most men tried to keep their previous schedules and spend as much time as possible out of the house, preferably outdoors. Many continued to gather on their fishing stages to make or repair nets, even though this was unnecessary. Power said "such uses of time and space, as well as the reasons for such uses, are contrived and necessarily signify a loss" (Power, 2005). Unfortunately fishing stages were also good places for sustained and destructive drinking, which easily turned into a full scale domestic and social problem. It is women who talk about this and other problems; men tend to deny any form of problem. "A lot of people, idle time, trying to find things to do...Cause everybody around here got little sheds for doing their gear and

one thing or another. And they're always, they go over to this guy's shed today and they probably be there for 4-5 days and then they go over to another guy's shed for another 4-5 days. I even told them myself, I said they're going to become alcoholics. 'Ah, that doesn't hurt. A few beers don't hurt.' But see, it went from probably half a dozen between two of them per day, now it's gone to a dozen or two dozen each per day...".

Given these material and social strains, and the inability of men to deal with their changed circumstances, instead preferring to cash in their "patriarchal dividend", it is hardly surprising to find various forms of family strain, including violence and marital breakup. One woman put it: "If I see somebody now that I haven't seen for a number of years, I don't dare ask about the spouse. I've been putting my foot in my mouth too often and said 'Well how is so and so?' And they say, 'Oh, didn't you know? We separated 2 years ago'" (Power, 2005). Drinking, domestic violence, and marital breakup are the obvious and manifest outcomes of the collapse of the fishery. There are also more hidden consequences. These include additional strains on women, a decrease in economic opportunities for women, and reinforcing rigid and traditional sexual division of labour. These consequences can all be understood within the framework of the "patriarchal dividend". In difficult times, the male sense of identity and power must be maintained, even at the expense of women's. Women must combine their increased workload with a decrease in their autonomy and power within and outside the household.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to take the notion of applying a "gender lens" to fisheries and aquaculture research one step forward. By emphasising that socially or policy oriented fisheries research must start from, and be rooted in the fishing communities themselves, we can better inform fisheries policies – at least with regard to their impact on those communities. Such research challenges the assumption that simply improving the resource or the benefits that derive from it will automatically benefit the communities that exploit them. In particular, by focusing on women, I have tried to show the very different impacts policy can have on their lives and their ability to negotiate satisfying lives for themselves and their families.

I have chosen to examine examples from Atlantic Canada and coastal Tanzania as contrasting cases from different parts of the world and with different social, cultural and economic frameworks. In both cases, I have argued that we have to go beyond the fishery itself and examine closely the impact changes in the fishery have on the communities that exploit them. Furthermore, by focusing particularly on women's experience in different contexts we can see that women tend to be more vulnerable and to have less autonomy and power than men, especially in worsening situations in fishery dependent communities. We can also see that women continue to take primary responsibility for the welfare of their households and that men are more likely to cash in their "patriarchal dividend", either when times are bad or because they have cultural "permission" to spend extra resources on themselves. Qualitative studies highlight the importance of taking seriously

the complex interaction of economic, cultural and social factors, together with all the other factors of difference and inequality in human societies. Women are held in a complex mesh of such factors, but they are not helpless. They continue to negotiate pockets of both autonomy and power and we can learn from their successes as well as from their challenges. Such studies should alert us to the complex context in which fishing, aquaculture and coastal fishing communities should be understood. Economic analysis, even when it includes the unpaid work of women, does not fully account for the situation in which women find themselves trapped.

This paper has also tried to overcome the limitations of the small scale, context specific studies of women in coastal or fishing communities that are now emerging. For these studies to have their full impact we need to develop some common framings, focusing on power, inequality and discrimination and, more positively, the ways in which women negotiate a better position for themselves and their families. While such an approach would not enable us to be strictly 'comparative' in the way that fisheries science studies can be, it would move research on gender issues in aquaculture and fisheries in a more broadly analytical direction. Initially, I suggest that we already have sufficient sensitive and well grounded small scale studies to begin bringing these together on a systematic basis. Such synthesising work would lead to discussion around appropriate frameworks for future large scale, genuinely comparative, research that would fully integrate aquaculture and fisheries practices with the needs of the communities that depend on them. Only such grounded and broadly based studies can help us to understand how power interacts with and influences cultural, social and economic change.

References

- Bennett, E. 2005. Gender, fisheries and development. *Marine Policy* 29:451-459.
- Binkley, M. 2002. *Set Adrift: Fishing families*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 219 pp.
- Biswas, N. 2011. Turning the tide: Women's lives in the fisheries and the assault of capital. Occasional Paper. Chennai, ICSF. 41 pp. http://icsf.net/icsf2006/uploads/publications/occpaper/pdf/english/issue_112/ALL.pdf accessed 22 July 2011.
- Connell, R.W. 1998. Masculinities and globalization. *Men and Masculinities* 1:3-23.
- Dolan, H. 2005. Restructuring and health in Canadian coastal communities. *EcoHealth* 2:195-208.
- Frangoudes, K. and E. Keromnes. 2008. Women and fisheries in Brittany. *Development* 51:265-271.
- Faustine, R.S. 2007. Social organization and the patterns of utilization and management of coastal resources: A case study of Songosongo Island and Somanga Village in Kilwa District, Tanzania. MA Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of DaresSalaam, Tanzania. 201 pp.
- Government of Tanzania. 2002. Tanzania Socio-Economic Database, Dar-es-Salaam, National Bureau of Statistics. Government Press.

- Grzetic, B. 2004. Women fishes these days. Fernwood Publishing, Halifax. 128 pp.
- Hamilton, L. and M. Butler. 2001. Outport adaptations: social indicators through Newfoundland's cod crisis. *Human Ecology Review* 8:1-11.
- Hapke, H.M. and D. Ayyanketil. 2004. Gender, the work-life course and livelihood strategies in a South Indian fish market. *Gender, Place and Culture* 11:229-256.
- Harrison, E. 1995. Fish and feminists. *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin* 26:39-47.
- Harcourt, W. 2008. Whatever happened to women, environment and development? *Development* 51:173-175.
- MacAlister Elliott and Partners Ltd (MEP). 2002. The role of women in fisheries. pp. 1-31 http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/studies/role_of_women/summary_en.pdf Accessed on 12 December 2011.
- MacDonald, M. 2005. Lessons and linkages: building a framework for analyzing the relationships between gender, globalization and the fisheries. In *Changing tides: gender, fisheries and globalization*, (eds. B. Neis, M. Binkley, S. Gerrard, and C.M. Maneschy), pp. 18-27. Fernwood Press, Halifax.
- Masawe, C. 2008. Analysis of marine products value chain for poverty reduction: A case study of Kilwa District - Tanzania, MA. Thesis, Department of Development Studies, University of DaresSalaam, Tanzania. 142 pp.
- Mascarenhas, O. 2007. Gender profile of Tanzania: enhancing gender equality. DaresSalaam: Tanzania Gender Networking Programme. 98 pp.
- Mbezi, R.G. 2009. Women's economic contribution in sustaining coastal households. a case study of Somanga and Songosongo villages of Kilwa District of Tanzania. MA Thesis, Department of Sociology, University of DaresSalaam, Tanzania. 114 pp.
- Medard, M. 1995. Women's strategies in the globalised Lake Victoria fisheries. In *Changing tides: gender, fisheries and globalization*, (eds. B. Neis, M. Binkley, S. Gerrard, and C.M. Maneschy), pp. 78-101. Fernwood Press, Halifax.
- Momsen, J. 2010. Gender and development. 2nd Edition. Routledge, London. 304 pp.
- Morris, L.D. 1984. Redundancy and patterns of household finance. *Sociological Review* 32:492-523.
- Msuya, F.E. 2011. The impact of seaweed farming on the social and economic structure of seaweed farming communities in Zanzibar, Tanzania. *World Aquaculture* 42: 45-48.
- Mwaipopo, R. 2008. The social dimensions of marine protected areas: a case study of Mafia Island Marine Protected Area. *Samudra Monograph*. Chennai: ICSF 38 pp.
- Neis, B., M. Binkley, S. Gerrard and M.C. Maneschy, (eds.). 2005. *Changing tides: gender, fisheries and globalisation*. Fernwood Publishing, Halifax. 307 pp.
- Neis, B. and S. Williams. 1997. The new right, gender and the fisheries crisis. *Atlantis* 21:47-62.

- Neis, B. 1992. Fishers' ecological knowledge and stock assessment in Newfoundland and Labrador. *Studies in Political Economy* 36:145-76.
- Oakley, A. 1972. *Sex, gender and society*. Temple Smith, London. 225 pp.
- Ommer, R. and Coasts Under Stress Project Team. 2007. *Coasts under stress: restructuring and social-ecological health*. McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal. 573 pp.
- Porter, M. 1983. Women and old boats: the sexual division of labour in a Newfoundland outport. In: *Public and private: gender and society*, (eds. E. Garmanikow, D.Morgan, H.J. Purvis and D. Taylorson). pp. 91-105. Heinemann and British Sociological Association.
- Porter, M. 1985. Skipper of the shore crew: The history of the sexual division of labour in Newfoundland. *Labour/Le Travail* 15:105-123.
- Porter, M., R. Mwaipopo, R. Faustine and M. Mzuma. 2008. Globalization and women in coastal communities in Tanzania. *Development* 51:193-198.
- Porter, M. and R. Mbezi. 2010. From hand to mouth: fishery projects, women, men and household poverty. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 31:381-400.
- Power, N. 2005. *What do they call a fisherman? Men, gender and restructuring in the Newfoundland fishery*. Institute of Social and Economic Research Books, St Johns 224 pp.
- Tanzania Coastal Management Project (TCMP). 2003. *Tanzania State of the Coast Report*. DaresSalaam, Coastal Management Partnership Science and Technical Working Group. 127 pp.
- Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP). 2005. *There are so many empty promises: the cost in time and money for households caring for HIV and AIDS sufferers*. E & D Limited, Dares Salaam. 37 pp.
- Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), Tanzania. 2006. *Changes in household non-income welfare indicators*. Unpublished Brief. 13 pp.
- Robinson, J. 1995. Women and fish plant closure: the case of Trepassey, Newfoundland. In: *Their lives and times: Women in Newfoundland and Labrador* (eds. C. McGrath, B. Neis and M. Porter), pp 163-174. Killick Press, St Johns.
- Williams, M.J. 2008. Why look at fisheries through a gender lens? *Development* 51:180-185.
- Winson, A., and B. Leach. 2002. *Contingent work, disrupted lives: I. labour and community in the new rural economy*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto. 192 pp.
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Tanzania Programme Office. 2005. *Collaborative marine and coastal resources management and livelihood development in Rufiji, Mafia and Kilwa, Tanzania*. Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa (RUMAKI) Seascape Programme (2004-2009). 45 pp.