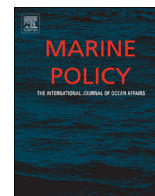




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Governing enclosure for coastal communities: Social embeddedness in a Canadian shrimp fishery

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ABSTRACT

Critical analyses of neoliberalism's influence on fisheries governance have documented how enclosure, quota leasing and renting, and commodification can precipitate negative social consequences for fishing communities. By contrast, this paper draws on the concept of embeddedness to argue that certain policies and social relations can regulate enclosure, quota renting, and commodification in ways that empower community-based groups to facilitate the anchoring of fishery resources and wealth in coastal communities. It does so through an analysis of northern shrimp fisheries in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, between the 1970s and the early 2000s. This case study illustrates how fisheries enclosure policies informed by geographically and morally defined principles of access and equity and limits on commodification can meaningfully embed fishery resources and benefits in rural and remote coastal regions that depend on small-scale fishing. Although the application of social principles continues to be marginalized in the context of neoliberal policy regimes that privilege individual economic efficiency over distributive concerns, this paper provides new insight into the conditions under which principles of ethical allocation and distribution of resources are able to persist through an era of neoliberalism.

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1. Introduction

Catch shares are part of the long-term enclosure and privatization of open-access oceans [1], a process through which privileges are allocated and privileged constituencies created [2,3]. They can be defined as “a means of managing fisheries by allocating a specific portion of the total allowable catch of a fish stock to individuals, cooperatives, communities or other entities” [4,5]. Longstanding academic and policy debates over the impacts of enclosure in fisheries have recently been reinvigorated in light of the promotion, implementation, and critical examination of catch share programs around the world [6]. Concerns over catch shares are linked to evidence showing how enclosure through the allocation of Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) can have negative effects on small-scale fisheries including on small-scale boat owners, crew employment, households and communities [7].

ITQ catch shares are a form of both privatization (creation of property) and marketization (creation of tradable property rights),

the latter of which is particularly important to those who claim ITQs lead to increased economic efficiency. ITQ systems are also widely considered a quintessential neoliberal governance mechanism: “What makes ITQs different—and what makes them a dimension of particularly neoliberal approaches to fisheries governance—is that they marketize allocation of fish catch” [8]. The policy debate over enclosing fisheries through catch shares centers largely on the issues of whether and how such marketable, or commodified, access alters the composition of the industry and its relationship to communities and regions [9]. Because of the commodification component of ITQs, the introduction of ITQs often leads to a transfer of quota and resource wealth from small, remote fishing dependent regions to larger fishing centers and to the corporatization of fisheries that had been embedded in primarily family- and community-based production systems [10]. This transfer of quotas and economic benefits out of smaller, remote coastal communities has been documented in Canada [11,12], Iceland [13], and Alaska [14,15,7]. In some cases these transfers happened in spite of measures that were put in place to limit the loss of quotas by smaller fishing communities [11]. Those able to benefit most from the commodification of fishing rights include larger firms or vertically integrated companies that consolidate and sometimes rent or lease out rights [7]. Even when fishers remain in coastal communities, significant portions

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of wealth can be lost to absentee owners through quota leasing costs [12].

Despite widespread criticisms of ITQs and calls for developing catch share designs to meet broader social goals, many policy makers, conservation groups, and academics continue to promote the neoliberal model of catch shares, which is distinguished by its highly commodified access arrangements [8,16]. In the USA, for example, regional management councils have relied on a limited set of guidance documents in efforts to design catch share systems, resulting effectively in the default development of individual quota catch share systems with little consideration for alternative ways that resource rights or privileges can be designed, created and allocated [5]. Policies institutionalizing a narrow variant of catch shares threaten to lock out alternative forms of access that have provided or could provide people living in coastal communities an opportunity to make livelihoods for themselves into the future. Such policies also ignore research from social and natural scientists that argue for a need to integrate wider goals and management objectives beyond conservation of fish stocks, conservation of marine ecosystems, and maximization of economic efficiency in fisheries management. These include consideration of ethics and justice [17,18]. Yet questions remain as to whether new forms of enclosure that involve community allocations and social justice considerations are nevertheless consistent with neoliberal approaches to governance [8,3].

This paper contributes to policy and academic discussions concerned with identifying and investigating alternative ways of organizing fisheries systems, including designing catch share systems within which attention is paid to both equity in access [19] and the need to protect and even enhance the role of fisheries in community and regional economic development. It does so through a case study of a Canadian shrimp fishery, which provides insight into the potential for institutions governed by principles of distribution of access and benefits to persist through an era of broader neoliberalization. In this fishery, management authorities distributed allocations of shrimp to community-based organizations that then leased their quota to offshore fleets in return for royalties and other economic benefits. These organizations further embedded benefits in communities by reinvesting resource rents to support regional inshore fishing and seafood processing initiatives and other kinds of regional economic development initiatives.

1.1. Case study and methods

This paper examines the case of allocation policies and development outcomes within northern shrimp (*Pandalus borealis*) fisheries in Atlantic Canada, with a focus on Newfoundland and Labrador. Northern shrimp is a shellfish with significant populations from the Gulf of Maine to the waters between Baffin Island and Greenland. Northern shrimp are usually found in waters with temperatures between about 1 and 6 °C and in areas with a soft, muddy ocean floor at depths between 150 and 600 m, hatching as larvae that feed on planktonic organisms and sought after as prey by fish species such as northern cod and Greenland halibut [20]. Although northern shrimp are trawled by Canadian fishers in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and off the coast of Nova Scotia, contemporary references to the northern shrimp fishery generally signify two fishing fleets, offshore and inshore, that operate in the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) management zones between the Grand Banks off Newfoundland and just south of the Arctic ocean off Baffin Island (corresponding to DFO Shrimp Fishing Areas 0–7) (Fig. 1). Northern shrimp are sensitive to oceanographic and climate changes and this has shaped in important ways the history and location of the two fleets [21,22]. The offshore fleet gained access to shrimp in the late

1970s when shrimp were most abundant in the northern range of the species, while the inshore fleet based in Newfoundland and Labrador gained access to northern shrimp in the late 1990s when a significant growth in biomass occurred in areas off the northeast coast of Newfoundland and Labrador [23,20]. The two fishing fleets also have different relationships to coastal communities. The offshore fleet of factory freezer vessels trawl, process, and freeze their catch at sea while smaller inshore trawlers ice their catch at sea and land it fresh in coastal communities for processing. The growth of the inshore fleet played a crucial role in alleviating the impact of the 1992 and other groundfish moratoria on some companies, owner-operators, crew, processing plant workers and communities. In 1994, the quota for northern shrimp was 22,500 metric tonnes (mt), all caught and processed by offshore factory freezer trawlers. By 2009, the total allowable catch had increased to 176,000 mt, with 137,000 mt either landed in coastal communities by inshore owner-operators and processed by plant workers, or caught by offshore vessels that paid royalties to cooperatives and companies that include in their mandates mechanisms to support reinvesting the revenue in the inshore sector and regional coastal communities in often remote regions.

The paper focuses on the fisheries allocation policies that helped produce this pattern and on the regional development outcomes in three areas in the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador engaged in the fishery—southeast Labrador, the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, and Fogo Island, Newfoundland (Fig. 1). The research design included a review of existing published and gray literature, and intensive field research based on in-depth key informant interviews carried out in St John's, in southeast Labrador, on the Northern Peninsula and on Fogo Island during roughly two-week visits to each region. The Fogo Island interviews were carried out in February 2012. Field trips to St Anthony and southeast Labrador took place in March 2012. A total of 54 individuals were interviewed—17 on Fogo Island, 11 in the Northern Peninsula region, and 23 in southeast Labrador, as well as 3 in St. John's with some people key to multiple case studies. The analysis highlights the specific experiences of the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company, St. Anthony Basin Resources Incorporated, and the Fogo Island Co-operative [24].

1.2. Conceptual approach

To explain this case, this paper uses Karl Polanyi's concept of institutional embeddedness, which contrasts forms of economic development guided by distributive principles that support social goals with those guided by *laissez faire* economic principles that create market conditions for social dislocation [25]. Applied to analyzing fisheries, the concept of embeddedness posits that state policies, economies, communities, and organizations can be "integrated systems held together by mechanisms that are legitimized on moral as well as pragmatic grounds" [26]. An embeddedness perspective can be used to explain a range of policy choices and community-based choices defined by the fulfillment of social goals, rather than by neoliberal principles privileging narrow conceptions of individual self-interest and economic efficiency. It shifts the focus away from policies and institutions that disembed production and social reproduction towards policies and institutions that integrate those realms [27]. This perspective underscores how social principles of distribution of access and benefits guided both state policy and community-based decision-making in the development of the fishery system examined below.

The next three sections of the paper analyze how enclosure, quota renting, and commodification—concepts usually associated with exclusionary consequences of neoliberalism—can be regulated to empower communities and to embed fisheries resources and development benefits in coastal communities. Part one

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