

**INFORMING SOCIAL OBJECTIVES IN FISHERIES POLICY:  
NOTIONS OF FISHERIES ‘DEPENDENCY’ AND ‘COMMUNITY’  
FROM FRASERBURGH, THE OUTER HEBRIDES AND SHETLAND**

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## Abstract

There is an ongoing argument that the biological priorities of the CFP are not a straightforward solution to the problems facing international fisheries management, and that social objectives need to be incorporated into policy. However, the social arm of fisheries is little understood in a management structure that prioritises scientifically-produced quantitative data over narrative-based evidence concerning the everyday lives of those living and working within the fishing industry. By investigating notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ - labels that currently pervade fisheries management but that remain poorly understood by decision-makers - with people in coastal fishing communities in Scotland, this research provides important new evidence to inform the social dimensions of fisheries policy.

In-depth qualitative data collected through interviews and participant observation in three Scottish case study areas - Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland - suggest that fisheries ‘dependency’ extends from a family’s income to the importance of fishing identity and heritage, whilst ideas of ‘community’ are complex and multiple. Empathy, created through shared routines of uncertainty and risk, emerges as an important factor in defining and binding people together. So too does the shared experience of living in remote areas, bringing together not only those who work in the fishing industry, but also those in the wider territorial community.

The controversies that arise at the interface between the current constitutional set up of fisheries management and the heterogeneous nature of the fishing ‘community’ suggest that understandings of fisheries ‘dependency’ need to take into account the strength of attachment to fishing as a positive identity and the substantial commitment to the sector that people show. Rather than attempting to shift people away from fishing, steps might be taken to support the strong social and business networks linked to the industry, and increase flexibility within fisheries management to accommodate the complexities of the fishing ‘community’.

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## Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Contents page	iv
Acronyms and Abbreviations	ix
Figures and Tables	xi
Chapter 1. Current pitfalls within fisheries management and concepts of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community'	1
1.1 Introduction	
1.2 The place of social objectives in fisheries policy	
1.2.1 The CFP and the 'social' of fisheries policy	
1.2.2 Creating an evidence base for incorporating social objectives	
1.3 Concepts of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community'	
1.3.1 Fisheries 'dependency'	
1.3.2 The fishing 'community'	
1.4 Community as a practice	
1.5 Research aims and objectives	
1.6 Structure of thesis	
Chapter 2. Framing the research: in-depth qualitative case study methodology	29
2.1 Introduction	
2.2 Using case study research	
2.2.1 Choosing the case study areas	
2.3 Collecting the data: how time was spent in the field	
2.3.1 Interviewing	
2.3.2 Participant observation	
2.4 Data Analysis	
2.4.1 Typing up the field notes and transcribing the interviews	

- 2.4.2 Coding the data
- 2.4.3 Writing the thesis
- 2.4.4 Discussion of ethical considerations
- 2.5 Effecting change in policy
  - 2.5.1 Sustaining and deepening industry and government relationships
  - 2.5.2 A shift in focus from social impact analysis to cultural awareness
- 2.6 Case study set up
  - 2.6.1 Fraserburgh, November 2010
  - 2.6.2 The Outer Hebrides, March 2011
  - 2.6.3 Shetland, July 2011
- 2.7 Summary

## Chapter 3. Everyday social and occupational routines

68

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Living and working in the fishing industry
  - 3.2.1 Working round the clock
  - 3.2.2 The importance of flexibility and adaptive response
  - 3.2.3 Indivisibility between fishing and the wider community
  - 3.2.4 The mirroring of uncertainty within fishing households
  - 3.2.5 Emotional forces that bring people together
- 3.3 Closeness, trust and networks that support industry renewal
  - 3.3.1 Trust within business relationships
  - 3.3.2 Importance of social and family networks
- 3.4 Intergenerational practices and socialisation
  - 3.4.1 Spending time on boats
  - 3.4.2 Local language and dialect
  - 3.4.3 Socialisation of the wider community
- 3.5 Self-sufficiency
  - 3.5.1 A culture of autonomy and flexibility
  - 3.5.2 Mutual dependence and reciprocity
- 3.6 Summary

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Connection to and empathy with those involved in fishing
  - 4.2.1 The role of empathy in reinforcing senses of the ‘place’-based fishing community
  - 4.2.2 Grief and loss
- 4.3 Passion for fishing: valuing freedom, autonomy and fishing identity
  - 4.3.1 A positive fishing identity
  - 4.3.2 Resistance to diversification
- 4.4 A closing of ranks
  - 4.4.1 Dissatisfaction with policy decisions
  - 4.4.2 Estrangement from government science
  - 4.4.3 Aggrieved by public views
  - 4.4.4 Shared feelings of ‘defensiveness’
- 4.5 Summary

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Multiple and dynamic ‘communities’
  - 5.2.1 A diverse mix of people and occupations
  - 5.2.2 ‘Fitting in’ and ‘settling’
  - 5.2.3 ‘Communities’ in flux
- 5.3 Fissures within the fishing industry
  - 5.3.1 The employment of foreign nationals
  - 5.3.2 Perceived differences between ‘place’ and ‘sector’
- 5.4 Alternative trajectories for communities
  - 5.4.1 Different senses of local capacity and initiative
  - 5.4.2 Necessity for local employment opportunities
  - 5.4.3 Incorporating fishing within wider territorial development
- 5.5 Summary

Chapter 6. Reflecting on notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ to inform social objectives 166

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 The complexity and heterogeneity of the fishing ‘community’
  - 6.2.1 Relationships
  - 6.2.2 Empathy
  - 6.2.3 Fishing and ‘community’ identities
  - 6.2.4 A ‘we/they’ mentality
  - 6.2.5 ‘Communities’ in a state of flux
  - 6.2.6 Contrasting future outlooks
- 6.3 Key challenges facing fishing communities
  - 6.3.1 A problem of disconnect with fisheries policy and science
  - 6.3.2 Difficulties with the social renewal of the sector
  - 6.3.3 The importance of flexible response
- 6.4 Giving concrete meaning to social objectives in relation to fisheries policy
- 6.5 Summary

Chapter 7. Conclusions and recommendations 193

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Summary of key research findings
  - 7.2.1 Everyday social and occupational routines
  - 7.2.2 Shared communities of the mind
  - 7.2.3 Inherent contradictions within communities
- 7.3 The social dimensions of fisheries policy
  - 7.3.1 Social relations
  - 7.3.2 Communication channels
  - 7.3.3 Positive identities
  - 7.3.4 Flexibility
- 7.4 Recommendations for future research
  - 7.4.1 Redesign social impact assessments
  - 7.4.2 Review the science of fisheries management
  - 7.4.3 Bring social considerations into main policy structure

7.4.4 Improve industry representation

7.5 Concluding remark

Postscript

References

209



## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CCTV	Closed circuit television
CEC	Commission of European Communities
CEVIS	Comparative Evaluations of Innovative Solutions in European fisheries management
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EFF	European Fisheries Fund
ESSFiN	European Social Science Fisheries Network
EU	European Union
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FDR	Fisheries Dependent Region
FIFG	Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance
FMAC	Fisheries Management and Conservation group
FQA	Fixed Quota Allocations
GVA	Gross value added
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICES	International Council for Exploration of the Seas
IFFM	Inquiry in to Future Fisheries Management
MMO	Marine Management Organisation
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council

MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield
nm	Nautical Miles
NSWN	North Sea Women's Network
PMSU	Prime Minister's Strategy Unit
RAC	Regional Advisory Council
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institute
SEERAD	Scottish Executive Economic and Rural Affairs Division
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SNP	Scottish National Party
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

## Figures and Tables

Figure 2.1	Map of Scotland showing location of Fisheries Dependent Areas	36
Figure 2.2	Code Map devised in December 2011	49
Figure 2.3	The code map with sub-codes and secondary data organised on top	54
Figure 2.4	Map of Fraserburgh area	59
Figure 2.5	Map of the Outer Hebrides	62
Figure 2.6	Map of Shetland	65
Figure 6.1	An early exploratory framework for thinking about the social renewal of the fishing industry	180
Table 2.1	Statistical overview of Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland	39
Table 2.2	Summary of the case study interviewees	42
Table 2.3	Summary of data collected from Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland	45
Table 2.4	Example of a field diary extract from the Outer Hebrides	47
Table 2.5	The sub-codes created from the NVivo analysis	52

# **Chapter 1. Current pitfalls within fisheries management and concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’**

## **1.1 Introduction**

“It is abundantly clear that environmentalists are dictating fisheries policies both in the UK and in Brussels, to the growing detriment of the fishing industry. The hypocrisy of the environmental movement is its ‘sustainable’ mantra, that all the deadly restrictions being imposed on fishermen are ‘for their own good’ – an excuse of tyrants down the ages to oppress people. Of course fishermen need healthy marine environments and eco-systems if they are to prosper in the long-term, but it is no help to fishermen and communities if the industry is killed in the process.”

(Fishing News, October 2009; p.2)

This comment from the fishing press about the perceived impact of environmental priorities within European fisheries policy reflects an ongoing argument that the prioritisation of ecological or biological objectives is not a straightforward solution to managing international fisheries. It has been indicated, across numerous contexts including policy, environmental campaigns and the news media, that the overriding objectives set out in the EU’s Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) - to safeguard the marine environment and halt the depletion of fish stocks in EU waters - are not being met (EEA, 2010; CEC, 2009a; ICES, 2003). According to global research an increasing proportion of fish stocks are fully or over-exploited (FAO, 2012). Moreover, reports of existing social conditions in fishing communities would suggest that the CFP’s philosophical framework, of taking care of biological sustainability in order to take care of everything else (CEC, 2009b, 2002), is not working. People in fishing communities have reported experiencing high levels of unemployment, out migration, and a reduction in the number of people involved in the fishing industry (Scottish Government, 2009a). There has also been a cultural shift in peoples’ identities away from traditional fishing that threatens to undermine the sustainability and renewal of the sector (Williams, 2008). It is clear from several studies on the social circumstances of fishing communities in Scotland (Jamieson et al., 2009; Ramsay, 2006; Nuttall, 2000) that a focus on biological and environmental objectives within fisheries policy is not helping to resolve social and cultural pathologies within fishing communities.

The situation points to an urgent need to rethink priorities within fisheries policy (Degnbol et al., 2006; Petterson, 1996). If current management systems are not protecting the longevity and wellbeing of the marine environment, or the lives of those living and working within fishing communities, do other objectives, aside from biological and ecological ones need to be more fully considered, and how can they be incorporated into policy? The traditional ‘sustainable development’ model incorporates three pillars: the environment, the economy and society and it has been argued that in order to achieve sustainable development all three issues have to be addressed (WCED, 1987a). Fisheries policy in Europe has failed to do this so far. Part of the difficulty is that within the policy structure, environmental objectives are well established, and economic objectives are demonstrated to some extent, whilst the social arm of sustainable development is little understood (Symes and Phillipson, 2009). The environmental or biological component of fisheries policy focuses on the concept of yield levels, or Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), and quantitative measures for achieving the conservation and sustainable use of fish stocks (CEC, 2011a; 2002). The economic component concentrates on fleet profitability and competitiveness as well as an efficient allocation of property rights (CEC, 2009a). The social parameters of policy have yet to take shape beyond the traditional notions of employment and ‘a fair standard of living’, as set out in Article 39 of Europe’s Treaty of Rome (CEC, 1957).

Within the Scottish Government, questions surrounding the ‘social’ of fisheries and social objectives are rife: What have been the social impacts of fisheries policy? What should happen to fishing communities and how should the Scottish Government deal with social objectives? What should social objectives comprise? How might they be measured? How does existing UK fisheries management address social issues (Scottish Fisheries Council Communities subgroup<sup>1</sup>, personal communication, 18 January 2010)? Decision-makers can see that existing policies are having detrimental economic and social effects, but few know how to redress this. It has been argued that a ‘socially responsible’ fisheries policy is needed in the EU that incorporates an explicit set of social objectives and which builds upon a social evidence base (Symes, 2009). However, there have been only a small number of social research projects funded by the EU to redress the dearth of social data and with which to inform a more socially responsive fisheries management approach, and there remains a need for a concerted step change within the social evidence base of fisheries policy. Meanwhile,

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Fisheries Council (SFC) Communities Subgroup was set up by the Scottish Government in 2009 and ran until 2012. It had a membership of Scottish Government policy officials, Scottish fishing industry representatives and other Scottish fisheries stakeholders.

recent reports on the current status of socio-economic research in fisheries, and on linkages between social research and other disciplines, suggest that more multidisciplinary research involving the economic, social and natural sciences needs to take place (Phillipson and Symes, 2013; Symes and Hoefnagel, 2010; Salz et al. 2007). Furthermore, if there is to be greater parity among the sustainable development pillars of fisheries policy, then the roots of the policy need to be unpicked and re-worked.

This thesis explores the potential meaning and justification of social objectives within fisheries policy, elaborating what social objectives might look like and identifying associated evidence needs. It presents research which has considered the broad socio-cultural conditions within Scotland's fishing communities from the viewpoint of the people living and working within them, including perceived impacts of recent fisheries policies. Drawing on notions of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community', the thesis describes the current experiences of those whose lives are directly affected by policy and by broader social and economic changes, and whose activities, meanings and contradictions, provide essential ingredients for improving the management of fisheries. In doing so, this research aims to advance thinking behind sustainable fisheries.

The remainder of this chapter reviews the balance of objectives within fisheries policy, including any existing understandings of social objectives, before going on to explore the concepts of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community' which feature prominently within policy and debates concerning the social dimension of fisheries. The chapter concludes by setting out the overall design and structure of the thesis.

## **1.2 The place of social objectives in fisheries policy**

### ***1.2.1 The CFP and the 'social' of fisheries policy***

In order to determine the place of social objectives within the wider framework of fisheries policy, there is a need to first consider the larger architecture of EU fisheries management: the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The CFP is the European Union's regulatory regime for governing fisheries in EU waters. Its origins lie in Europe's Treaty of Rome and the 1970s common organisation of the market for agricultural products. The CFP has, since its inception, been driven by two overriding objectives: to ensure the longevity of commercial

fish stocks in EU waters and to give Member States fair and equal access to the resource (Wise, 1984).

In response to the accession of three new member states to the European Economic Community (EEC) – the UK, Ireland and Denmark – in the early 1970s, all of which had extensive coastlines, the principle of equal access to fishing was laid down<sup>2</sup> (Symes, 1997). Equal access applied to member states' territorial waters of 0-12 nautical miles (nm). However, by 1976 international developments had prompted coastal states to lay claim to Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of 200 nm from their coastline thus widening significantly the scale on which the principle of equal access operated. At this juncture, the European Community assumed responsibility for the development of fisheries policy within the EEZs of its Member States. The CFP was formally established in 1983 following seven years of negotiations. The principle of equal access for all EU vessels to Member State waters remained, although a temporary derogation made exempt a narrow 3nm coastal band around each country that was reserved to local fishermen with a tradition of fishing in that area. This derogation was nominally for a ten year period, and has been renewed at each decennial review of the CFP. In subsequent reviews, exclusive national fishing rights have been extended to 6 nm, with other Member States' vessels allowed to fish in the 6 to 12 nm band where they have had historic access rights. This derogation may be interpreted as an early 'social' objective of fisheries policy by enshrining into the heart of the CFP a policy objective that prioritises local fishing community needs. However, it is unclear as to the extent to which the measure is actually a social measure, or whether it is for reasons of protecting national interests.

An EU-wide objective to ensure the future of commercial fish stocks stems from several decades of international environmental discussions and agreements, where the international community has focused policy objectives on the sustainability of natural resources (UNEP, 1972; UNCED, 1992). At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, national governments signed up to measurable sustainability targets for several environmental policy areas as a means of quantifying, aligning and evaluating their efforts. Within fisheries policy the sustainability target was to achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for commercial fish stocks by 2015 (UN, 2002, 31 (a)). MSY is the point on a supply curve where the amount of fish that can be caught reaches its peak before catch levels start to fall away as effort

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<sup>2</sup> The principle of equal access to fishing was laid down in Article 2 of Regulation 2141/70.

continues to rise (Beverton and Holt, 1957). The achievement of MSY targets featured in the CFP's last reform proposals (CEC, 2009a) and guides regional policy developments, from determining how many days at sea each vessel can fish in a year, to piloting CCTV equipment on vessels in order to improve the compliance of fishermen. The central tool of the CFP since its inauguration, and subsequently to achieve MSY targets, has been to set an annual total allowable catch (TAC) for each commercial fish species based on government scientific measurements of the fish stocks. Each year European member states negotiate and are allocated a share of this TAC according to their historical record for fishing that particular stock. In this way the European Commission aims to assure that each Member State has 'relative stability' for their respective fishing industries. Relative stability was set up in 1982 to fix the distribution of TACs for important commercial species among member states. The idea was to ensure that fishing industries would not be put at risk by the expansion of other member state industries, or by subsequent enlargements of the EU. Attempts to abandon or modify the principle of 'relative stability' are continually resisted by different parts of the fishing industry, indicating that for the sector it is a highly valued fundamental principle of the CFP.

The principles of relative stability, equal access, and the conservation of the fish stocks, underpin the CFP. However, as a top down command and control system, the CFP has largely failed to manage Europe's fisheries. According to the European Commission, "the objectives agreed in 2002 to achieve sustainable fisheries have not been met overall" (CEC, 2009a, p.6). There have been several reasons put forward for the ineffectiveness of the CFP. One revolves around the CFP's focus on MSY. The limitations of MSY as an effective management tool for fisheries have been discussed in the literature since before the CFP. The assumptions upon which the supply curve is built, for example, that fish stocks are inherently stable, behave predictably under moderate levels of exploitation and tend towards an equilibrium, have been seriously questioned since the 1970s, when it was pointed out that "MSY assumes away such complexity as food-web relations in trying to predict single species yields" (Larkin, 1977, cited by Berkes et al., 2003, p.7). There have been calls for widening the tools of fisheries management beyond a focus on MSY to incorporate 'mixed' or 'multi-species' quotas (ICES, 2012; CEC, 2009a) and moves towards a low- $F^3$  fishery (Scottish Government,

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<sup>3</sup>  $F$  is used to denote fishing mortality levels caused by fish being removed from a stock through human fishing activity as opposed to being removed from a stock through any other cause of death, such as disease. Article 3(f) of the EC Council Regulation No 2371/2002 states that "'fishing mortality rate" means the catches of a stock over a given period as a proportion of the average stock available to the fishery in that period" (CEC, 2002)



2010, p.71). However, Berkes et al. argue that a continual focus on quantitative targets, or ‘output’-oriented management tools will continue to be inadequate for supporting the sustainability of natural resources:

“... many... consider population numbers, and ecosystem behaviour in general, to be predictable, at least in theory... But there is a fundamental difference between the view that quantitative prediction is difficult and data intensive (‘we need more research’) and the view that nature is not equilibrium centred and inherently unpredictable. For much of ecology and resource management science, complexity is a subversive idea that challenges the basis of population and yield models.” (Berkes et al, 2003, p.7)

It has also been argued that a main threat to the conservation of fish stocks in EU waters relates to the lack of attention to the social, institutional and cultural basis of fisheries (see Jentoft, 2000). However, even the ‘social’ itself is cast as part of the problem, where unstructured social concerns arise within the scientifically moderated decision-making processes (Symes, 2009; Hersoug, 1996). Social considerations are therefore often either seen as a nuisance, undermining the scientific recommendations for fisheries management, or implicit in the routine and intuitive judgements of decision makers and stakeholders who must balance multiple concerns. Whilst there are increasing demands for incorporating explicit social objectives into fisheries policy (Urquhart et al., 2011; Symes and Phillipson, 2009; PMSU, 2004), the European Commission has argued that attempts to address social issues in the past have only worsened the state of fish stocks and the prospect of a healthy fishing industry. Whilst it has commissioned a number of regional studies in the past to consider the ‘social’ aspects of fisheries (CEC, 1999; 1991), in its 2009 Green Paper on the reform of the CFP it argued that where social objectives, revolving around issues such as employment, have been invoked, “the result has always been to further jeopardise the state of the stocks and the future of the fishermen who make a living out of them” (CEC, 2009a, p.9).

It follows that whilst a future for Europe’s fishing industry is “an important policy objective for the European Union” (CEC, 2009a, p.5), the EU ultimately prioritises a biological and ecological focus:

“It is... crucial that any compromises made to cushion the immediate economic and social effects of reductions in fishing opportunities remain compatible with long-term ecological sustainability, including a move to fishing within MSY, eliminating discards and ensuring a low ecological impact of fisheries.” (CEC, 2009a, p.9)

In discussing priorities for CFP reform two years on from the Green Paper, the European Commission continued to argue that social viability can only result from the restoration of healthy fish stocks. It persists in arguing that by focusing on biological productivity, social and economic issues will take care of themselves. Rather than articulating social objectives, continued emphasis is placed on protecting the fish stocks by prioritising, for example, the elimination of discards (CEC, 2011a).

Questions have been asked about the focus of social objectives: are they about community well-being (Britton and Coulthard, 2013), the recognition and inclusion of fisheries stakeholders within fisheries management and policy (Jentoft, 2000), or available alternative employment (Jepson and Jacob, 2007)? Or is it about the effective role of local agencies and organisations, such as fishing associations and fishermen's wives associations, and greater attention to local knowledge and adaptive approaches to management (Clay and Olson, 2008; Berkes et al., 2003; Berkes and Folke, 1998)? In thinking about the long-term goals of 'sustainable development', Symes and Phillipson (2009) suggest that structured social considerations have a tendency to be overlooked, causing ambivalence towards social issues in fisheries policy and a failure to identify explicit social objectives. The authors propose a four-tiered approach to the social dimension of fisheries that incorporates 'individual rights', 'community needs', 'sectoral issues' and 'societal values'. Individual rights is about securing income for fishers and the right to fish; community needs involves recognising the importance of social networks within coastal communities that ensure the renewal of the industry; sectoral issues relate to the role that the inshore sector plays in supporting coastal communities and ensuring its sustainability; and societal values are about listening to public concern surrounding the fishing industry.

The loci of potential responsibility for social objectives within fisheries policy is also dispersed and complex. There are two dimensions: one revolves around multilevel governance; the other around the place of sectoral fisheries management in regional development. The evolution of fisheries policy in Europe has resulted in a complex division of responsibility for fisheries policy and management between the European Commission and Member States. For example, during the last CFP reform member states rejected ideas put forward by the EU in its Green Paper to review the social and economic tenets of the CFP at EU level, arguing that it was something to be decided at member state level. Symes and Phillipson (2009) argue that with fisheries policy being governed at both EU and Member State levels, in complex, multi-level government systems responsibility for dealing with

social concerns can be misplaced. One of the problems, then, may be tied into a sense of responsibility for setting and acting upon social objectives. Should social objective setting take place at EU or Member State level, or even at a more regional level, such as within the relatively recently formed Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) (CEC, 2002), or a combination of all these scales (Symes and Phillipson, 2009)? Moreover, the loci of responsibility for social considerations are further complicated by devolved fisheries management arrangements in the UK.

Furthermore, is social objective setting a matter for fisheries policy at all? Should local and regional authorities handle the social arm of fisheries policy rather than fisheries policy makers and managers? Does fisheries policy and territorial development policy go hand in hand? And how far does fisheries policy need to understand wider regional development issues, and regions need to consider fisheries? To date, social issues have been largely annexed to fisheries policy within fisheries or regional development structural funds, meaning that social issues are not embedded into the main policy development structure. These funds, set up in the past to support the aims of the CFP, have included the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) from 2000-06, the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) from 2007-13 to support the restructuring of the industry and, most recently, Axis 4 of the EFF to support economic diversification strategies and ‘quality-of-life’ improvements and development in areas where there is a fishing industry in decline.

However, there have been arguments at member state level for greater attention to social issues. In the UK, a 2004 strategy document argued for explicit social objectives to be brought into fisheries policy (PMSU, 2004). Whilst providing detailed recommendations, such as making a strong case for a community quota system in ‘vulnerable and dependent fishing communities’ (p.85), it did not elaborate on how such communities were to be defined and many of the Strategy Unit’s proposals have still to be acted upon. Defra’s long term vision for fisheries subsequently referred to the contribution of fishing “to the local economies and culture of coastal communities” (Defra, 2007; p.8), and the aspiration for fishing communities to be “resilient and diverse enough to withstand fluctuations in the availability of fishing opportunities”. However with the social and cultural conditions of coastal communities opaque and poorly understood at policy level, the social dimension of the UK government’s vision for sustainability has remained largely undefined.

Since Scottish devolution at the end of the 1990s, responsibility for fisheries management in Scotland has resided with the Scottish Government. Within Marine Scotland, the Sea Fisheries Division is tasked with supporting ‘communities’ and the ‘inshore sector’. A series of policy documents have aspired to support fishing communities (SEERAD, 2001) and ensure an influential voice for the industry (Scottish Executive, 2005). The Scottish National Party have committed to helping ‘coastal communities’ (SNP, 2007) and have urged a ‘national strategy for Fisheries Dependent Areas’ (SNP, 2011). One of the reasons they give for this revolves around the contribution that the fishing industry makes to Scotland’s national economy. However, a difficulty facing policy makers is in knowing quite what constitutes a fishing ‘community’ or a fisheries dependent region (FDR) and what the needs may be. Many questions remain: for example, should policy-makers support the growth of the fishing industry or should development efforts in coastal towns and villages be focused on other industries? The answers are not straightforward and made more difficult by a lack of evidence about the role of fishing within, and the social issues affecting, coastal towns and villages.

### ***1.2.2 Creating an evidence base for incorporating social objectives***

The introductory part of this chapter has discussed the growing calls for incorporating more explicit social objectives into fisheries policy. There have also been related arguments for strengthening the social evidence base and research capacity in order to improve fisheries management (Urquhart et al., 2011; Symes and Phillipson, 2009). This section reviews the state of the social research base in fisheries that might offer more systematic insight into the development of social objectives in fisheries policy.

The European Commission has financed a number of social research projects to evaluate the success of the CFP (CEVIS, 2008; Salz, 2007; ESSFiN, 1999, 1996). One such project argues that social and cultural data needs to be included in fisheries policy in order to understand issues such as cod recovery (Delaney, 2008). Delaney suggests bringing social and cultural data to the fore using tools such as ‘social impact assessments’ and ‘community profiling’ in order to develop a realistic understanding of how communities react to industry or societal restructuring. Such social and cultural indicator sets can include demographics, community institutions and society and culture. Many have argued for better baseline evidence of the socio-cultural basis of fishing communities (MMO and Marine Scotland, 2012; Symes and Hoefnagel, 2010; Hatchard et al., 2007) to complement the rather barren ‘socio-economic’

studies of fisheries areas commissioned by the EC (CEC, 1999, 1991). However, Symes (2009) argues that there are serious shortfalls in the availability of data to describe the social conditions of fisheries or fishing dependent areas because social impacts are both hard to recognise and difficult to quantify. He suggests that there are three interrelated problems that obscure our view: (1) a tenuous understanding of the issues involved, (2) a dearth of qualitative and quantitative studies to guide the thinking, and (3) the absence of readily available, comparable social data beyond the basics of employment related information. Whilst there is other data out there, such as the national census and, in Scotland, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the usefulness of looking at the sector alongside such statistical data sets would appear to be limited.

There have been past studies into the social impacts of fisheries policy and the social conditions of fishing communities (Jamieson et al., 2009; ESSFiN, 1998). Most of the literature in Scotland refers to the economic situation and the decline of the fishing industry. There are notable works relating to social and cultural aspects within the east or north east of Scotland (Williams, 2008; Hatchard et al., 2007; Nadel-Klein, 2003, 2000; Nuttall, 2000; Munro, 2000), many of which draw on qualitative social research. A bibliographic review of fisheries social science literature (ESSFiN, 1998) highlights some of the central themes that have traditionally dominated fisheries social science including the concept of ‘fisheries dependent areas’ (Symes, 2000a; Wise, 1996; Apostle and Barrett, 1992) and the importance of ‘property rights’ (Archer and Jarman, 1993; Arnason, 1993; Bailey, 1996; Berkes, 1985; Berkes et al, 1989; McCay, 1995, Ostrom, 1990) and ‘regulatory systems’ (Hanna and Munashinghe, 1995; Symes and Crean, 1995). A stream of this research has advocated broadening the scope of fisheries management to focus not only on the resource but also on strengthening relations within fishing communities (Pettersen, 1996; Holm, 1995; Mariussen, 1996; Palsson, 1989). Pettersen (1996), for example, argues that key social and cultural requirements of sustainability are to increase peoples’ control over their own lives and allow changes that are compatible with peoples’ culture and values. She suggests that these are considerations that must become a part of fisheries management. Her research shows that the management of fisheries in Norway has not resulted in a ‘sustainable’ fishery because although fisheries policies have allowed the cod stocks to recover, it has been at the expense of social and cultural conditions in fishing communities. However, the state of the social science research community is rather undeveloped, fragmented and lacking structure.

The social science evidence base has also considered best approaches to natural resource and environmental management and policy-making, institutional arrangements and systems of governance (Cinner et al., 2012; Gutiérrez et al., 2011; Symes, 2009; 2006; Kooiman et al., 2008; 2005; Berkes et al., 2003; Symes and Phillipson, 2001; Gray, 1998; Phillipson, 1996). Here, the focus of social evidence is not on the impact of policy or the substance of policy measures, but on the ‘how’ of natural resource management – its processes of engagement, loci of responsibility, recourse to different sources of knowledge etc. Berkes et al. (2003) suggest that sustainability within natural resource management is a “process” that involves the accumulation of different knowledge, and continuously taking on board changes to systems, or “adaptive management” (p.2). The authors argue that fundamentally, achieving sustainability requires “understanding the system’s behaviour to help guide management directions”. In this case, the system is not just the fish but also the other actors in the ‘socio-ecological system’ of fisheries, for example, the industry, the wider public and policy-makers (see also Jentoft, 2000; Donaldson et al., 2002). ‘Social systems’, they say, incorporate things like governance which involves property rights and access to resources, and knowledge, which includes ‘science’, ‘local knowledge’ and ‘other world views’.

Recent reviews of the shape of social science research in fisheries (Urquhart et al., 2011; Symes and Hoefnagel., 2010; Hoefnagel et al., 2006) map out particular routes for informing the sort of evidence needed for policy. Urquhart et al. (2011) advocate “an agenda for future research that would contribute to the inclusion of social and cultural dimensions of fisheries in policy and management strategies” (p.244). Of the agendas they identify, they call for a deepened understanding of the contribution that fishing makes to local coastal communities. This has begun to be explored by Defra (Reed et al., 2011, Defra, 2009). However there is as yet little development on the policy-needed ‘tools’ for bringing the social and cultural aspects of fisheries alongside the economic and ecological. Urquhart et al.’s suggestions revolve around good communication and relationship building across people, places and institutions, whilst Symes and Hoefnagel (2010) emphasise a need for clear communication of results across a broad audience through better “... knowledge transfer between the research scientists and the end users, including the Commission, member state administrations and the industry” (p.271). However Symes and Hoefnagel also argue that a focus by social scientists on themes of fisheries governance has resulted in a neglect of other areas of importance such as the ‘community’:

“The emphasis on institutional development coincides with a neglect of community studies through which the economic and social consequences of fisheries policy are refracted and adaptive strategies best examined. Consequently, the social sciences have in recent years tended to divorce policy effects from their important social and cultural contexts” (Symes and Hoefnagel, 2010, p.269)

A deeper understanding of the fishing ‘community’, and impacts of management decisions on people living and working in the communities, has been described as “the missing link” of fisheries management (Jentoft, 2000). The need to develop a systematized sense of the social circumstances of fishing communities, and to understand more fully the notion of the fishing ‘community’ and of fisheries ‘dependent’ areas has been advocated in the past (Clay and Olson, 2008; Symes, 2000a, Phillipson, 2000) and is reflected by the Commission’s recent proposition to set out a social module to data collection in EU fisheries (CEC, 2011b).

There is also a need to consider the meaning of fisheries ‘dependency’ further, and who the term ‘dependency’ refers to. Is it the fishermen, the stocks, the households and businesses, the wider community, or something else? In exploring the notion of fisheries ‘dependency’, Jentoft (2000) argues that the ‘community’ and the stocks exist in a symbiotic relationship, and are *dependent* on each other: communities depend on stocks, and stocks depend on communities. In this way, the well-being of the ‘community’ is crucial to the health of the fish stocks, and vice versa. As a result, it is important, says Jentoft, to have “policies to strengthen civil society institutions” (p.53). However, at present, the dominant discourse in policy and public media is that the fishing community is not an equal variable in fisheries management. The fishing community is not regarded as being in a symbiotic relationship with the marine environment. Instead, it is the ‘dependent’ variable, dependent on healthy, viable fish stocks. As such, the focus has been on the protection of fish stocks over and above the state and well-being of the community as a principal management objective. Phillipson (2000) suggests that understanding fisheries ‘dependency’ is crucial for injecting sensitivity and regional variation into fisheries management, but that to understand it requires the inclusion of “social as well as economic variables” (p.17). In particular, a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances facing fishing communities, from the mouths of those living and working at the sharp end of the industry, would appear to be vital. As Symes and Hoefnagel (2010) suggest, “...the success of any management action will in part depend on how the policy measures are interpreted and acted upon by the fishing community” (p.270). It is clear then that if social objectives are to be brought more explicitly into fisheries policy, a

clearer understanding of the social and cultural conditions of fishing communities from the viewpoint of those living and working within them is needed. Bringing social objectives into closer parity with environmental and economic objectives requires a thorough investigation of the issues affecting people involved in the fishing industry. In particular, a fuller account from those living and working in the industry and surrounding coastal communities of their experiences and understandings of the concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’, as labels that currently pervade fisheries management, is called for.

The remainder of this chapter reviews the research to date on understandings of the concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’, before setting out the research aims and objectives for the empirical study.

### **1.3 Concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’**

Existing literature on concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ would suggest that the two concepts are very much interlinked (Ross, 2013; Brookfield et al, 2005; Lindkvist, 2000; Phillipson, 2000; Randall and Ironside, 1996). For example, Phillipson (2000) suggests that “Analysis of fisheries dependent areas depends first and foremost on the identification and diagnosis of communities at risk” (p.17). Others have highlighted how the concept of fisheries ‘dependency’ informs understandings of the fishing ‘community’, and vice versa (Clay and Olsen, 2008; Berkes et al., 2003). Clay and Olson, in using a spatial definition to define a social relation, explain that the legislation governing marine fisheries in the US defines fishing *communities* as those areas that are “substantially dependent on ... the harvest or processing of fishery resources” (p.144) and suggest that the key to understanding the relationship between humans and their environment is investigations of ‘vulnerability’ and ‘risk’:

“Vulnerability and resiliency highlight the role of people, in relation to each other and to the environment, in creating and coping with risk” (Clay and Olson, 2008, p.144)

Clay and Olson suggest that by understanding the nature of the ‘fishing community’ it is possible to learn more about existing vulnerabilities and resilience strategies at work in marine capture fishing societies, to inform policy directions on ‘ecosystem management’ (p.144). They suggest the intertwining of fisheries ‘community’ and ‘dependency’ has been



driven by a move to ecosystem-based management in fisheries, where the key to such an approach is to include social concerns early on in the management process.

The following section looks at how the underpinning concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ are currently understood.

### ***1.3.1 Fisheries ‘dependency’***

Dependence conveys a sense of reliance on something, and suggests that thing has value and is important. Many have tried to get to the heart of what resource dependency means (Hessels and Terjesen, 2010; Oliver, 1997) and, more specifically, to understand dependence in relation to fisheries (Marshall et al, 2007; Symes, 2000a). Who is dependent? Is it the resource? Is it the individual, the household or the community? And how do they relate to each other?

The concept of fisheries dependency has been explored in economic terms (CEC, 1999; 1991; Lindkvist, 2000; Symes, 2000b), in political terms (Brookfield et al., 2005) and also in social and cultural terms (Jacob et al, 2001; van Ginkel, 2001; Nuttall, 2000). In economic terms fishing ‘dependency’ has been explained through employment figures or contribution to GVA (CEC, 1999, 1991). For example, the EU’s 1991 and 1999 regional studies, considering the ‘social’ aspects of fisheries, were informed primarily by economics. As a result, low levels of fisheries ‘dependency’ in coastal areas were reported, based on a minority percentage of the working population working in fisheries, or contribution to local GDP (Symes and Hoefnagel, 2010). In other works, areas in which the fishing industry employs more than 10 % of the workforce (Symes, 2000b) or more than 5% of the workforce and where there is significant production output (Lindkvist, 2000) have been described as fisheries dependent areas. However, defining ‘dependency’ through employment has limited use. At best, defining fisheries ‘dependency’ through employment figures has led to member states, such as Scotland, being able to identify its own “fisheries dependent areas” (Scottish Government, 2010).

The ‘dependency’ of fisheries regions was also mobilized politically as a central issue in the early years of CFP formulation (Wise, 1984) and throughout its life span. Coastal towns and villages have benefited economically from being seen as fisheries ‘dependent’, bringing both EU funding and preferential access to fisheries resources. For example, areas seen as fisheries ‘dependent’ have benefited from Relative Stability, six-mile limits, the Hague Preferences

and the Shetland Box. Fisheries or regional development structural funds annexed to the main policy structure, such as the EU-wide PESCO funding (1994-99) has supported community-based initiatives in areas seen as 'dependent' on fishing, as has the FIFG scheme that paid for people to decommission, improve ports and support developments in the processing sector. EFF funding is also directed towards those areas that are experiencing a decline in the local fishing industry, and most recently the Axis 4 structural fund is specifically designed to support community development. Brookfield et al. (2005) highlight the EU's use of the concept of 'fisheries dependent areas' to direct funding as showing how politically important it can be for areas to be defined as 'dependent' on fishing.

However, despite EU initiatives to support fisheries dependent coastal communities, research would suggest that the fishing sector is continuing to diminish. For example, Brookfield et al. (2005) have explored the issues facing people in four case study areas on the UK's east coast: Shetland, Peterhead, North Shields and Lowestoft. In each place they identify economic constraints but also opportunities for people living in fisheries dependent regions. For example, they suggest that the globalisation of the fish food industry is putting the UK in a competitive field where small fishing boats often lose out. Investment is often directed towards larger technologically advanced boats, making it harder for smaller boats and ports to compete. So whilst the concept of 'dependency' can be a powerful tool for bringing money or rights of access to the fisheries resource, it also exposes power struggles and fissures within the fishing industry. 'Dependency' is often claimed by the inshore sector, dependent on local fishing grounds and local fishing resources. But it is also present in the discourses of the offshore sector, for example within the end of year fishing negotiations. There are complexities therefore involved in discussing fisheries 'dependency', for example, in equating 'dependency' with the biggest commercial ventures, or equating 'coastal communities' and 'dependency' with the inshore sector alone.

Notions of fisheries 'dependency' have also been explored in social and cultural terms (Ramsay, 2006; van Ginkel, 2001; Symes, 2000a; Thompson et al, 1983) exposing the limits to which fisheries 'dependency' can be understood solely on an economic basis. For example, it has been argued that the economic or employment importance of fishing is not solely what makes a place 'dependant' on the sector, but that there are other more intimate social aspects that define 'dependence' (Nuttall, 2000). Grounding his study in the north east of Scotland, Nuttall describes the coastline from Aberdeen round to Inverness as a remote and sparsely populated area with a great deal of complexity. There are small isolated hamlets in close

proximity to prosperous ports and centres such as Aberdeen. There is also a growing tourist industry on the north east coast that incorporates the Scottish Lighthouse Museum in Fraserburgh and numerous whiskey distilleries. Nuttall argues that there is a problem with describing the North East of Scotland as “fisheries dependent” in economic terms alone, because the fishermen often work in different industries part-time. This includes the oil-rigs but also onshore labour and the tourist industry. However, despite the dominance of oil and gas in the region, fishing communities have existed in the North East since the sixteenth century and remain reliant on fishing for employment and culture. As a result there is still a sense in many areas that fishing is vital for the survival of the community.

Nuttall’s study would suggest that reliance on fishing is rooted within families and households:

“It may be fair to say that, as a region, north-east Scotland is not wholly fisheries dependent, but that fishing is essential to its economy and a vital part of its culture. Fisheries dependence may be more readily observed and analysed within families and households.” (Nuttall, 2000, p.107)

The ‘household’ has often been used as a lens through which to understand peoples’ cultural dependency or attachment to their livelihood (Oughton and Wheelock; 2003), and has been described as a resource for sustaining people’s involvement in fishing (Williams, 2008; Nadel-Klein, 2000; Pettersen, 1996). Where stocks have collapsed, or the industry has been restructured through market and policy changes, research has shown that people have survived through belonging to a ‘fisheries’ household. Pettersen, for example, describes the degree to which peoples’ lives were affected by fisheries policy in Lofoten, Norway, when the stocks collapsed in the early 1990s. She interviewed 27 women from the area married to or living with fishermen all of whom fished the winter spawning cod. She described how all households received their main income from fishing and that the new regulatory regime was affecting all those interviewed. Households were using one of four ‘strategies’ to cope with the crisis: expansion, diversification, retrenchment or withdrawal. With expansion the women of the household moved more into fishing and the men did more fishing. The household income was maintained by the men spending less time at home, whilst the women had less time for child care. This ended up with the families discouraging their children from entering the industry. With diversification, incomes generally dropped, causing distress within the family. Men dropped out of fishing and ended up around the house more, which often created

tensions. Women became the main breadwinners using previous training to gain access to alternative employment. With retrenchment the families experienced reduced fishing and therefore reduced income. As a result they readjusted their lifestyles and depended more on social security and the paid work of the woman. This option was available to those without a family to support. With withdrawal families were forced out of fishing due to illness or age-related unemployment. No other options were available for this group because the families involved were either too old or too young with no other skills or experience. Their income was greatly reduced and social welfare was not enough. This resulted in a dramatic change in life and economic situation.

It was clear that the crisis in Norway in 1992 involved political and legal decisions that the fishing population felt powerless to influence:

“During the crisis many families lost much of what had previously given their lives meaning: the ability to practise their occupation freely and support themselves with little help from the state [...] New quota regulations have removed rights of free access to the fishery for the coastal population; this is in conflict with the culture and values of the fishing population.”

(Pettersen, 1996, p.245)

Pettersen’s research illuminates how household strategies helped people in Norwegian fishing communities have a greater sense of control over their own life and live, to some extent, according to a culture and value-system based around fishing. This is reflected in a Scottish context in Nadel-Klein’s (2003, 2000) research about women historically supporting an inshore, household-based fishery on the east coast of Scotland.

Other studies have focused on strong social networks as a lens through which to examine fisheries ‘dependency’. Van Ginkel (2001) describes how one becomes tied into and dependent upon a social and cultural network that is created and regenerated by working in the fishing industry. These social networks among fishermen are strengthened by sharing the same element of physical danger and economic uncertainty in their occupation, where interpersonal closeness results as a way of coping with it.

A key concept within studies of resource ‘dependency’ is that communities that use or harvest a resource are not homogeneous. In their research on resource-dependent communities in Canada, for example, Randall and Ironside (1996) contrast wood processing communities with fishing communities in terms of the extent to which their labour forces are directly or indirectly dependent on the extraction or processing of resources. One feature of

heterogeneity they say is the dominance of part-time female employees in the fish and food processing communities. Their study shows that resource dependent communities are a diverse group in terms of their degree of economic dependency on the resource or ‘dominant’ industry, their isolation from densely populated, urban areas, their stability of employment, and the roles played by other employment sectors outside of the dominant one. The heterogeneity of the resource ‘community’ is discussed further in section 1.4.

### ***1.3.2 The fishing ‘community’***

A number of prominent themes surrounding ‘community’ in its broadest sense exist in the literature, to include notions of participation, conflict, difference and similarity (Shucksmith 2012; Goodrich and Sampson; 2008; Pahl, 2005; Liepins, 2000a, 2000b; Crow and Allan, 1994; Cohen, 1985). These build on earlier studies on ‘community’ from European rural sociology of the 1950s and 60s that began to move the concept beyond issues of ‘place’ and ‘occupation’ (Crow, 2002; Stacey, 1969). In other examples, the concept of ‘community’ has been used to describe human social relationships that extend beyond the home and family. Cohen (1985) has argued that “Community is... the arena in which people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life outside the confines of the home” (p.15).

The term ‘community’ is widely used in fisheries policy (see Ross, 2013 and Clay and Olson, 2008). However there has been limited research, and little consensus, on what the fishing ‘community’ actually is. In general, there has been a movement away from fixed ‘place’ and/or ‘occupation’ definitions to include more “broadly conceived interactions” that revolve around meanings and practices (Clay and Olson, 2008, p.145). Fishing communities *have* been discussed in relation to both occupation and place (Reed et al., 2013; Ramsay, 2006; Nuttall, 2000), with territory and place remaining prominent in understandings of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’. For example, Nuttall (2000) describes the fishing communities of Aberdeenshire as distinct geographic communities sitting within larger territorial communities. His description resonates with Cohen’s (1985) analysis of ‘community’ as having distinct physical and social boundaries setting them apart from one another and also from non-fishing communities. Notions of ‘community’ that revolve around the dominance of a particular industry have been called ‘occupational’ communities (van Ginkel, 2001; Crow and Allan, 1994; Bell and Newby, 1971). Van Ginkel (2001) describes fishing as a ‘maritime’ occupation that constitutes close-knit communities who build their

entire lives around fishing. This includes their place of work, dwelling, home, family and socialising. ‘Occupational’ communities therefore can revolve around place, the household, the family, social networks, shared values, a shared job or industry, and altruism.

However, Van Ginkel’s work also informs a wider strand of ‘community’ research that demonstrates how geographically dispersed groups of people can be united through senses of togetherness that extend beyond place or occupational routines. Many socio-cultural studies of fishing communities have highlighted the importance of fishing for helping people to feel a sense of belonging (Urquhart and Acott, 2013; Brookfield et al., 2005; Apostle et al., 1998). These studies show that whilst ‘community’ remains concerned with people that have something in common: be it residence, interests, attachments, or a shared experience that in turn shapes social identities and patterns of action, the commonalities can also be understood as practices that go beyond framings of just ‘place’ or ‘occupation’.

#### **1.4 Community as a practice**

Contemporary studies of ‘community’ revolve just as much around something that is performed or done, rather than something that is (Liepins, 2000a; Crow and Allan, 1994; Cohen, 1985). The following section examines the notion of ‘community’ through processes of identifying similarities and difference and the idea of heterogeneity.

It has been argued that ‘community’ is not fundamentally occupation or place-based, but symbolic, comprising a practice of asserting individual or collective identity by relating to and comparing with others, and establishing boundaries between those who are seen as ‘kin’ and those who are not (Cohen, 1985). Kinship has been a key feature within studies of fishing communities (van Ginkel, 2001; Nadel-Klein, 2000; Cohen, 1987; Thompson et al., 1983). For example, Nadel-Klein (2000) has argued that webs of kinship have linked fishers all along the east coast of Scotland, with the strongest ties being found within the villages themselves. Van Ginkel (2001) identifies various cultural forces that facilitate kinship. These include esoteric knowledge, skills and expertise, extreme or unusual work demands, consciousness of kind, and ideologies that extend beyond work and bestow positive self-image and positive image of the work. He also highlights standards for ‘proper’ and ‘improper’ behaviour, work codes, a consistent shared way of speaking, and the importance of shared rituals, taboos, symbols, myths, stories and jokes.

The practice of establishing boundaries to create communities of meaning and identity has been recognised as an important conceptual tool within community studies. Cohen's work on the practice of identifying both similarities and differences to others and establishing a sense of belonging with those who are seen to be similar is seminal here. Focusing on the use of boundaries in identifying similarities and differences to others, Cohen argues that "not all boundaries, and not all the components of any boundary, are so objectively apparent. They may be thought of, rather, as existing in the minds of their beholders. This being so, the boundary may be perceived in rather different forms, not only by people on opposite sides of it, but also by people on the same side" (Cohen, 1985, p.12). Cohen's symbolic construction approach to understanding 'community' focuses on meanings, mental constructs and 'the thinking' rather than 'the doing' (see also Pahl, 2005). It is symbolic as opposed to structural, where the use of the word 'community' arises from the desire or need to express a kinship with some and a distinction from others. The key to Cohen's conception of 'community' is the practice of relating to others to mark out an identity, whether an individual one of 'self' or a collective 'community' identity. The establishment of mental 'boundaries' to practically discriminate one community from another, and encapsulate the identity of a community, is necessary, he suggests, for giving human life meaning. Abram (1996) similarly points to a need for interaction with otherness in order to feed the human spirit.

Cohen argues that it is through the practice of identifying similarities and differences that a group of people can create the idea of a 'community' which in turn facilitates a sense of belonging. This practice of identifying similarities and differences to others, and creating a 'community' is done on a scale that can include one's home, family, job, livelihood or a geographic area. At the top of the scale it normally involves a sense of feeling different to people in other countries. Thereafter people identify differences to others in the same nation state. Then there is a sense of difference to people in other parts of the same geographical region or city, followed by a sense of difference to people in other parts of the same town or village, and finally a sense of difference to others in the same street. Cohen argues that the differences people feel as they move down the scale become more important because they relate to increasingly intimate areas of their lives. This would include kinship, friendship, neighbouring, rivalry, familiarity and jealousy, things that Cohen argues form the social process of everyday life and a consciousness of 'community'.

Specific descriptions of fishing communities in the north east of Scotland resonate with Cohen's analysis of 'community'. For example, the fishing 'community' has been described

as a metaphysical space for developing and maintaining a fishing identity through the practice of negotiating and placing others (Williams, 2008, Nuttall, 2000). Williams (2008) argues that the 'sea', 'household' and 'community' are central spaces for developing and maintaining a fishing identity but that peoples' fishing identities are being threatened as these spaces change in the face of industry restructuring. Nuttall too highlights how the fishing community can set itself apart from a wider territorial community through practices of identifying similarities and differences along social and cultural lines of distinction (Nuttall, 2000). Others have argued that a strong sense of identity has been a resource for fishers historically as a response to their marginalised and powerless position in society (Nadel-Klein, 2000).

People's level of commitment to fishing would also appear to inform senses of 'community'. A strong sense of individual fishing identity is informed by success, danger and autonomy. To become part of the community of fishing you have to be motivated and willing to put your body and life on the line. Sometimes it is about a machismo, a pride and swagger associated with the dangers involved. The creation of a shared sense of autonomy and pride associated with a 'fishing' identity has been discussed at both the individual and collective level, with a crucial aspect to the fishing 'way of life' being that those involved view their occupation positively, for example by being known as a 'successful skipper'. Van Ginkel (2001) portrays fishing as an important source of personal identity for people in coastal communities and the reason why fishers continue to fish even when it is no longer economically viable to do so. He argues that elements involved in the catching sector, which include a high degree of danger and uncertainty, serve to bestow a positive self-image and a positive image of the work involved. Nadel-Klein (2000) describes the history of fishing as one in which those involved were proud of what they did because of the danger and hardship involved in the job, and which set them apart from non-fishers. A strong sense of identity with fishing has been a part of the cultural fabric of fisher-folk, a kind of a communal property and form of resistance:

“... they came to cherish their identity as a form of communal property, a weapon against the denigration they suffered at the hands of non-fishers...” (Nadel-Klein, 2000, p.366)

Independence is another key quality of being a fisherman and results in clashes between fishermen and anyone outside fishing who tries to tell them how to do their job:



“Fishing permeates their entire personas and their image of themselves. For many, giving up as a fisher would mean giving up their dignity and pride.” (van Ginkel, 2001, p.189)

A shared sense of autonomy would also appear to be a key feature in the collective identity of the fishing community. A shared fishing identity has been shown to reinforce notions of both fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’, and be capitalised upon for economic gain in two ways. First, reinforced notions of place-based fisheries ‘dependency’ can bring public development funding to an area, as has already been discussed. Second, reinforcing notions of a place-based fishing ‘community’ can attract tourism. Brookfield et al. (2005) discuss the potential of a ‘fishing’ identity to generate income, for example to unite regeneration and development initiatives in an area and in doing so, create alternative opportunities in sectors like tourism. Rather than the catching sector being supported to provide a significant economic output, the fishing industry is used symbolically to strengthen the heritage of these towns as “fishing towns” and attract income from tourism:

“The fishing industry becomes a type of ‘personality’ for the town and a brand that can be used to sell North Shields to visitors.” (Brookfield et al. 2005, p.65)

Again, this illustrates the synonymous nature of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’. However, such strengthening of place-based fishing identity can actually serve to threaten individual identities tied to fishing. Nadel-Klein (2000) points to an “anxiety about cultural boundaries” in fishing communities about fishing heritage designed by non-fishers and for incomers with no connection to fishing. Whilst memories and repeated story telling by fisher-wives may help people keep a hold on their identity and sense of who they are, and their community, non-fishers telling the tale can undermine fisher’s abilities to keep hold of their sense of self:

“When collective pride and community defence are essential components of life, what happens when fewer people care or when the caring takes the form of self-exhibition in a living museum?” (Nadel-Klein, 2000, p.366)

Brookfield et al. have similarly highlighted the potential change in status and identity of ex-fishers forced to adjust to part time, low skilled jobs provided by the tourism industry. However their study shows that in some communities the main aim has been to help those involved in fishing move away from a ‘real’ catching sector to capitalising on the heritage of the industry:

“For the community of Lowestoft, the importance of the ‘real’ fishing industry is incidental, but the concept of a ‘virtual’ fishing industry is extremely important, especially in its impact on the tourism industry. In Lowestoft, fisheries-dependence is found in the capturing and selling of the ‘idea’ of fishing, rather than in the catching and selling of fish.” (Brookfield et al., 2005)

Studies of communities have also shown that a dominant feature of them can be a feeling of being misunderstood and undervalued by people outside of the community. Such imagined communities can arise, for example, from a collective feeling of difference to others, or external threat. Part of collective resource of community identity, and a type of shared community knowledge, is a particular understanding of the resource. For example, Van Ginkel (2001) says the discrepancy between how fishermen view the state of the stocks and how policy makers and scientists do is due to fishermen having a ‘folk’ view that views natural processes as chaotic and unpredictable. This is in contrast to a ‘scientific’ view that struggles to embrace unpredictability. It has been similarly argued that commonality is reinforced by real or imagined external threats. In exploring notions of ‘community’- making, Crow and Allan (1994) point to the strengthening of networks within a community as a response to having outside forces acting upon a community, to which the community feels powerless:

“They were bound together through high-density kin and neighbour networks which could be mobilised to provide emotional and material aid as it was needed” (Crow and Allan, 1994, p.188)

In a similar vein, in looking at collective behaviour Nuttall (2000) has described how fishing identity has shifted from one based on pride to one associated with ‘criminality’, or feeling criminalised. Nuttall explains how criticisms of fishermen can also affect the wider territorial community:

“Criticism of fishermen is, by extension, criticism of the wider community and social networks of which fishermen are a part.” (Nuttall, 2000, p.114)

The heterogeneous nature of communities has also been a key theme of research. Studies of both place- and occupation-based communities have shown that a practice of community can be the simultaneous processes of fracturing and cohesion. This is perhaps most clearly illustrated in studies of territorial communities where a we/they mentality, that results in notions of ‘local’, ‘incomer’, insider’ and ‘outsider’, emphasises the role of self-identity, commonality and togetherness in the process of community-making. Having ‘insiders’ and

'outsiders' co-existing in the same place-based community highlights internal divisions and antipathies that can exist within a territorial community. For example, in the fishing town of Peterhead in north east Scotland, Moore (1982, cited by Crow and Allan, 1994) has described social homogeneity as deceptive. The town involves divisions along lines of religion, type of residence, belonging to fishing and not belonging to fishing. Here, in-migrant workers have faced antipathy from locals, preventing the emergence of a unanimous voice.

Studies of migration have been especially important in understanding the heterogeneous nature of communities. Migration can be seen as a key practice of 'community' making. The friendship, kinship and rivalry described by Cohen (1985) can encourage migration out of a community if ties extend to a different community or if close-knit societies are felt to be claustrophobic and offer only limited privacy or freedoms to explore social and individual identities (Bjarnason and Thorlindsson, 2006).

Reconceptualisations of 'community' have therefore been shown to allow understandings of 'communities' which embrace multiple meanings, heterogeneity, diverse spatial forms, dynamism and uneven expressions of power. Liepins' (2000b) study in New Zealand, for example, highlights how 'community' can embrace the physical, the cultural, the 'territorial' and the 'imagined'. Her reconceptualised model of 'community' allows researchers to explore the polyphony of voices and politics, both in specific local places and across the distances of imagined 'community' to explore power, diversity, marginalisation and everyday social practice and change. In this way, community can be recognised as an "idea" that is not fixed but changing and context-dependent.

Studies of traditional working class 'communities' also reveal the complexities of community solidarity. Whilst traditional concepts revolve around the "established" having something in common which marks them off from others and renders those others "excluded" from entering the "community", Crow and Allan say that "What that commonality consists of can vary" (Crow and Allan, 1994, p.184). Despite studies of traditional working class communities there is no single homogenous community and in all cases there are internal differences - people experience and engage in different ways and it happens differently across time, and in different times.

By recognising the concept of 'community' as a series of meanings then it is possible to incorporate the diversity of people attached to a certain construction of 'community'.

According to Liepins, 'community' is complex and is too regularly used in social studies and

governance without greater attention given to its complexity. Her work illustrates that concepts of 'community' are context-specific; that 'community' is a fluid, non-static and negotiated concept. Concepts of 'community' therefore have analytical potential and can be used as a tool in the governance of "sustainability" provided they can be reconceptualised to recognise that 'community' is not fixed, but changes its nature and character over time. This resonates with Berkes et al's (2003) argument for embracing the adaptive nature of socio-ecological systems to promote the sustainable use of natural resources, where the fluidity and constant changes of a system are taken on board.

It is clear that notions of 'community' are multiple and various. As Crow and Allan put it, "...there clearly is no such single thing as community. Community has many meanings; it involves different sets of experience for different groups of people, and indeed for the same people at different times in their lives" (Crow and Allan, 1994, p.183). Like Liepins (2000a), Crow and Allan advocate the use of 'community' as an analytical tool for understanding social contexts and relationships:

"... people do have an understanding of community organisation, community action, community policing, community nursing, community work, community schooling and the like. Their understandings may differ and be ill-specified and extremely difficult to operationalize and measure. They certainly lack the precision commonly expected of scientific terms but, like 'family', they exist and their received meanings are lived out and acted upon. It is in this way that it makes sense to speak of 'the community' as an actor..." (Crow and Allan, 1994, p.193)

What Crow and Allan advocate as the main elements to concentrate on when studying 'community' is the nature of the solidarities entailed and the level of commitment there is to the community in question.

Cohen similarly argues that 'community' is not something that is capable of objective definition and description, but rather that to understand 'community' one has to "capture members' experience of it. Instead of asking, 'what does it look like to us? What are its theoretical implications?', we ask, 'What does it appear to mean to its members?' Rather than describing analytically the form of the structure from an external vantage point, we are attempting to penetrate the structure, to look outwards from its core." (Cohen, 1985, p.20). It follows that concepts of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community' then also need more explanation from within the communities themselves, from the vantage point of people living and working in the fishing industry.

In summary, this chapter has introduced the discourse of concerns surrounding a failure of international fisheries management to protect and sustain fisheries, and the need to define explicit social objectives in fisheries policy. By examining the evolution of the CFP over the last 30 years, it has identified particular themes within fisheries social science which highlight a need to consider further the notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ from the vantage point of those living and working within the fishing communities themselves. Having drawn out some of the dominant themes relating to fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ in the literature, to include economic and political perspectives, as well as boundary-making and heterogeneity, it is clear that both concepts are complex. Fishing communities have been understood both as comprising spatial or geographic nexus of social practices but also non-spatial relations associated with ‘togetherness’. There remains a need to find a deeper sense of what we mean by fishing communities and the lines of similarity and difference through which they are produced. Fisheries ‘dependency’ too is a complex notion and questions remain over what fisheries ‘dependency’ means, whether it relates to the individual, the household, or something more.

### **1.5 Research aims and objectives**

This research aims to collect the views of people living and working in fishing communities in Scotland on notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’. In doing so, it aims to define social objectives, and also bring social objectives more integrally into the main structure of fisheries policy. Currently, social issues are addressed within fisheries policy mainly through structural funds, annexed to the main policy structure. However, there would still appear to be problems within the marine environment, the industry and the communities. For example, there has been a call for marine protected areas (MPAs) based on views that the sea bed is being damaged by human activity, and that fish stocks are endangered. There are reports from the fishing industry that people are increasingly going out of business in the sector, and having to live off the state, or in some cases turning to alcohol or drugs. There are also reports that young people in communities are leaving because of having few employment opportunities in the coastal communities, largely due to a shrinking fishing sector.

The research seeks to consider the nature of fishing communities through an analysis of the experiences of those living and working in the industry and also those living within the wider

community. In this way, it aims to provide supporting evidence to fisheries policy makers from the vantage point of the people whose lives their decisions directly affect, and insight into their activities, meanings and contradictions that will be vital for the future success of fisheries management. This research also contributes to a need to consider the place of fishing within its local socio-economic context and to explore its contribution to wider territorial coastal communities in Scotland. In doing so, it picks up an issue that is currently missing in the literature concerning how the ‘fishing community’ is seen by the wider non-fishing community. The thesis seeks to lay the foundations for setting out more explicit social objectives in fisheries policy, for the Scottish Government, but also for wider fisheries management.

Central to the thesis are three research questions:

1. What is a fishing ‘community’ and how do people living in these communities ‘depend’ on fishing?
2. What are the key social, cultural, economic and environmental challenges perceived by fishing communities?
3. What is meant by the social objectives of fisheries policy, how might they be given concrete meaning, and what are the evidence needs?

This thesis is therefore concerned with identifying the meanings that exist among people who live at the sharp end of the fishing industry but which have largely been hidden thus far. A key feature of the research is to find out what fishing communities are experiencing - to understand their particular world view and social situation. It is also about revealing underpinning processes of community making that transcend time, even if the subject matter itself may change.

## **1.6 Structure of thesis**

This opening chapter has discussed the key messages from the literature concerning what a fishing ‘community’ is, and how people living in them ‘depend’ on fishing. It has argued for an investigation of the terms fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ from the community residents themselves, to bring a fresh and new understanding to the concepts, and also that might help to include those involved more closely in subsequent management or development

processes. Having set up a methodology for collecting empirical data from the field in Chapter 2, the thesis goes on to present qualitative research findings from Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland in Scotland, three case studies where in-depth interviews and participant observation are used to explore the social conditions of areas in Scotland defined as 'fisheries dependent'. Chapter 3 describes the everyday social and occupational routines of people living in the case study areas, while findings on specific 'communities of the mind' are presented in Chapter 4, and the inherent contradictions within the communities are discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 returns to the question of social objectives in fisheries policy and discusses how the research findings might inform their development. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the key messages from the research and makes some recommendations for future research and policy development.

## Chapter 2. Framing the research: in-depth qualitative case study methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to inform the social dimensions of fisheries policy by evidencing the views of people within fishing communities and the key social and cultural issues affecting them. In doing so, the research adds to a knowledge base within policy about the fishing industry and fishing communities that is currently limited by a dominance and prioritisation of quantitative data. The evidence presented in this thesis, therefore, is based on an in-depth, qualitative case study methodology: going out to fishing communities and talking to people about their lives, backgrounds, experiences with the fishing industry and their perceptions of how management decisions are affecting them.

As has already been discussed, fisheries management has depended heavily on the ability to take quantitative measurements:

“... under the CFP, fisheries management has almost exclusively been organised by fixing upper limits on the quantities of fish which may be caught per year (Total Allowable Catch (TAC)) and associated national quotas (Fixed Quota Allocations FQAs and Individual Transferable Quotas ITQs), together with technical measures such as net mesh sizes, closed areas, closed seasons and decommissioning of the fleet” (Urquhart et al., 2011, p.241)

There has been interest too about how to measure the ‘social’ aspect of fisheries through social impact assessments (SIAs), something that has been discussed within a wider environmental policy context (Burdge et al., 2003). A desire to *measure* reflects a widespread drive to quantify things in order to manage them (see Agenda 21 from UN, 1992) and years of international agreements concentrating on measurable targets (see, for example, UNDP Millennium Development Goals, 2013). However, it has been argued that the social dimension of fisheries policy, and the parameters of the fishing ‘community’, cannot be reduced to quantitative metrics:

“...community is a fluid concept with a critical basis in both social and ecological relationships not easily reduced to statistics on permits, landings and fishing-themed icons” (Clay and Olson, 2008, p.147)



The renewal of social capital within the sector, for example, has been said to rest upon a perception of fishing as a viable occupational choice, which in turn depends on the status of fishing, and levels of confidence in the industry's future (Scottish Government, 2010). Such issues are likely to be complex and contested, varying between different contexts, and hence not easy to quantify meaningfully. Similarly, current perspectives on fisheries 'dependency' and 'community' would seem inadequate for informing the social dimensions of fisheries policy. For example, the fishing 'community' is often understood to refer to those local communities around the coastline that have links to the fishing industry, whether current or historical, when in fact Chapter 1 has already highlighted how there is a multitude of ways to understand 'community'.

Within UK environmental policy-making, it has been shown that the importance of *values* and the *interpretation* of data can be overlooked (Wilkinson, 2009). A recent example within fisheries policy is the perception "derived from standard economic and common property concepts" that the attitude of fishermen is to catch as much as possible for financial gain and to keep their businesses going (Alexander et al., 2013, p.239). Alexander et al. argue that little consideration is given to the deeper attachments to fishing based on values, culture, emotions and psychology. Their research highlights the significance of such deep attachments to fishing, as expressed by those working in the fishing industry, in helping to understand better what they are dealing with when it comes to fisheries management and policy.

In the words of Cameron, "... not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted" (Cameron, 1963). The Bruntland Report (WCED, 1987b) too advocates that it is crucial to keep 'people' and 'industry' in mind when thinking about 'sustainable development'. So as the literature on co-management and governance would suggest, measuring is not always useful, or possible. Within fisheries policy, most interests acknowledge the inherent difficulties of measurement, by advocating a 'precautionary' and 'best available scientific' approach to management. In understanding the 'social' of fisheries management then, policy needs to work out how to operate with the non-measurable, or at least not through 'mathematics' alone (Elden, 2006, p.180).

To understand more fully the character of, and the issues facing people living in fishing communities, a qualitative research methodology is needed. Qualitative methods are called upon to provide depth to understandings of complex behaviours, needs, systems and cultures (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994). This research therefore attempts to access meanings that are

inherently in flux and not static. However, that is not to say that an understanding of the perceptions, interpretations and relationships given in this research cannot be useful for policy makers. Cohen (1985) explains:

“...subjectivity clearly suggests the possibility of imprecision, of inexactitude of match, of ambiguity, of idiosyncrasy... different people oriented to the same phenomenon are likely to differ from each other in certain respects in their interpretations of it. They may not be aware of this difference, especially if the phenomenon is a common feature of their lives. Their disagreement is not necessarily, then, an impediment to their successful interaction... People can find common currency in behaviours whilst still tailoring it subjectively (and interpretively) to their own needs” (Cohen, 1985, p.17)

The remainder of this chapter describes the qualitative research methods used to collect empirical data from people within fishing communities. The first section explains the reasons behind the choice of a case study methodology and how and why three case study areas were chosen. This is followed by a review of the ethnographic research methods used in the field to collect the data – interviewing and participant observation. The chapter then describes how the empirical data were analysed, and how the thesis was written. Knowledge exchange with the communities, the industry, the scientists and policy has been an integral part of this research process. Section 2.5 describes the methods used to facilitate knowledge exchange in the research, including the background behind sustaining relations with policy makers and the fishing industry. The chapter concludes with brief descriptive introductions to the three case study areas of Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland, in order to set into context the in-depth empirical findings that follow.

## **2.2. Using case study research**

In order to access the vantage point of those living and working within fishing communities, this research uses ‘case’ methodology. Case methodology grounds knowledge in ‘cases’ which is, according to Flyvbjerg (2006), the only way to move from a beginner’s to an “expert” level of understanding:

“Context-dependent knowledge and experience are at the very heart of expert activity. Such knowledge and expertise also lie at the center of the case study as a research and teaching

method or to put it more generally still, as a method of learning... It is only because of experience with cases that one can at all move from being a beginner to being an expert. If people were exclusively trained in context-independent knowledge and rules, that is, the kind of knowledge that forms the basis of textbooks and computers, they would remain at the beginner's level in the learning process." (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p.222)

Good case studies are therefore crucial for strengthening social science and producing rich, complex descriptions of important issues (Eisenhardt, 2002; Yin, 1994; Van Maanen, 1988). Flyvbjerg argues that large random samples, questionnaire surveys and related quantitative analysis are important for the development of social science, but where they can provide breadth and case variation, they fall short on producing 'depth', and this is where case studies are particularly useful. In the context of fisheries, social scientists have advocated investigating specific case studies of fishing communities (Urquhart et al., 2011; Phillipson, 2000).

A case study is a detailed examination of a single example that, in some instances, can provide reliable information about a broader class. Eisenhardt (2002) argues that case analysis allows the researcher to become intimately familiar with a case as a standalone entity and explore the unique patterns of each case before generalizing patterns across cases. Cross case patterns, she says, force the investigator to go beyond initial impressions and improve the likelihood of accurate and reliable theory. The process of constant juxtaposition of conflicting realities tends to "unfreeze" thinking so that theory is generated with less researcher bias than in incremental studies. Eisenhardt argues that it is useful to apply theory-building case study research when little is known about a phenomenon, or when current perspectives seem inadequate because they have little empirical substantiation. She also argues that theory-building case study research is useful when current perspectives conflict with each other or with common sense, and when serendipitous findings in a theory-testing study suggest the need for a new perspective:

"...the conflict inherent in the process is likely to generate the kind of novel theory which is desirable when extant theory seems inadequate" (Eisenhardt, 2002, p.31)

Eisenhardt describes a "road map" for building theory from case study research. This includes using theoretical sampling as opposed to random sampling and using multiple data collection methods. She suggests that using multiple case studies can result in new "frame-

breaking” insights appropriate when trying to give an in-depth picture of a particular social situation.

It is important that case studies are carefully chosen. Flyvbjerg argues that the idea that “one cannot generalise from a single case” or that “the single-case study cannot contribute to scientific development” is one of several misunderstandings about case-study research. Much “depends on the case one is speaking of and how it is chosen” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p.225). He posits that where “extremes” are used, such as when Galileo used the extremes of metal and a feather to reject Aristotle’s law of gravity, then the findings can “be expected to be valid for all or a large range of” other scenarios:

“Carefully chosen experiments, cases, and experience were... critical to the development of the physics of Newton, Einstein, and Bohr,... In social science, too, the strategic choice of case may greatly add to the generalizability of a case study.” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p.226)

This research collects qualitative data from people living within fishing communities in Scotland to deepen understanding of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ and, in doing so, inform an awareness of the ‘social’ of fisheries for policy and management. With this in mind, three case study areas were chosen in which to collect empirical evidence. The priorities of the research were to gain ‘depth’ from specific cases, to limit the cases to ‘critical’ ones in light of available time and resource, and to attempt to go beyond initial impressions by ‘unfreezing’ the thinking that is currently hindering fisheries development. In this study then, multiple cases are used to enable exploration and cross-comparison of ideas about ‘community’ and ‘dependency’ between different places. How these case studies were chosen is discussed in the following section.

### ***2.2.1 Choosing the case study areas***

The aim of this investigation is to look at concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ from the point of view of people based within coastal communities in Scotland. Scotland is a good choice of study area to look at concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ because it has a rural and largely undeveloped coastline, poor in resources, along which its fishing industry is dispersed. Fishing has been a primary source of wealth creation for many areas in Scotland, making fishing a nationally important industry. The case study selection did not rest on the assumption that there were fishing ‘communities’ out there

as objects to be studied (Bell and Newby, 1971). Rather, the starting point for selection was to identify ‘fisheries dependent areas’ that, through national statistics, are known to incorporate the bulk of the fishing industry. The Scottish fishing industry accounts for only around 1% of total employment in Scotland, but is significantly more important economically for some rural coastal regions. Four principal ‘fisheries dependent regions’ in Scotland were defined by the Inquiry into Future Fisheries Management (IFFM) (Scottish Government, 2010). This was based on the highest volume of fish landings, the largest percentage of people employed in the catching, processing and aquaculture industry, and the heaviest fleets. This included the north east mainland, Shetland, the west coast mainland and the Outer Isles. The ports in these four areas collectively account for 70% of Scottish landings according to basic data from Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics. In addition each area has more than 50% of their fishermen employed full time.

This research chose three different locations in Scotland to investigate notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ with people on the ground. Selection of the three case study areas was based on a combination of expert analysis and also advice from the Scottish Fisheries Council (SFC) ‘communities’ subgroup. It was agreed with members of the SFC communities subgroup that in order to gain a broad perspective of the issues facing people within coastal communities in Scotland, a case study from each of the east coast, the west coast and the northern region of Scotland would be selected to represent the different coastal areas. This provided a broad framing for the choice of case studies. Flyvbjerg (2006) refers to this as “maximum variation cases”, where cases are chosen “to obtain information about the significance of various circumstances for case process and outcome”. In this research, three cases were chosen that were as different as possible in size, location and type of fishing sector. It was also agreed that each case study should aim to incorporate the bulk of what is left of the fishing industry on its respective coastline to understand the issues affecting people who still live within close proximity of a working fishing industry. This is what Flyvbjerg refers to as “critical cases”, where cases are chosen “to achieve information that permits logical deductions for the type” (p.230), in this instance, insights into fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ by those who are currently affected by fisheries policy. The type of cases chosen for this research are referred to by Flyvbjerg as ‘extreme’ or ‘critical’ cases, in this context those cases with the highest expected level of fisheries ‘dependency’.

“When the objective is to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon, a representative case or a random sample may not be the most

appropriate strategy. This is because the typical or average case is often not the richest in information. Atypical or extreme cases often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied... It is often more important to clarify the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences than to describe the symptoms of the problem and how frequently they occur.” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p.229)

This research chose what Flyvbjerg refers to as “information-oriented selection”, that maximizes “the utility of information from small samples and single cases” and where “cases are selected on the basis of expectations about their information content” (p.230).

Flyvbjerg suggests that selecting critical cases “requires experience”, something members of the SFC Communities sub-group had plenty of. Whilst the need for a case study on each coastline was confirmed at the outset, the specific town or area was identified and confirmed on a sequential basis, following the experience of each case study. The analysis involved looking at how ‘fisheries dependent areas’ in Scotland have been defined so far, a review of aggregate statistics, and identifying possible combinations of three case studies accordingly. The three areas with the greatest percentage of the working population involved in the sector according to the 2009 coastal Travel to Work Areas (TTWA) in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2010) were Fraserburgh (19.6%), Berwickshire (12.3%), and the Uists and Barra (11.1%) (see Fig 2.1). These figures were based on catching, processing and aquaculture. They did not take into account services, trades or local service sector jobs associated with fishing. Another set of possible case studies was identified according to the largest value in landings and the largest fleet from 2009, arguably the localities that involve the most people, boats and businesses in the fishing industry. These were the districts of Fraserburgh, Shetland and Stornoway respectively (Scottish Government, 2009b).

Whilst statistical analysis had revealed Berwickshire as a possible case study area for the east coast, having the second highest percentage of its working population involved in fishing, the town of Fraserburgh was ultimately chosen for the east coast and for the first case study, with community subgroup members feeling that the social problems in Fraserburgh were especially pronounced. Together with Peterhead, Fraserburgh incorporates the bulk of the Scottish trawler and pelagic fishing fleets on the east coast, making an important contribution to the local economy, but unlike Peterhead has a harbour that is yet to diversify away from fishing.

# Fisheries Dependent Areas by Travel To Work Areas (TTWAs)

Code, TTWA Name

- 1, Aberdeen
- 2, Annan
- 3, Ayr
- 4, Banff
- 5, Berwickshire
- 6, Brechin and Montrose
- 7, Campbeltown
- 8, Dingwall
- 9, Dumfries
- 10, Dundee
- 11, Dunfermline
- 12, Dunoon and Rothesay
- 13, Edinburgh
- 14, Elgin and Forres
- 15, Falkirk
- 16, Fraserburgh
- 17, Girvan
- 18, Inverness
- 19, Islay and Mull
- 20, Keith and Buckie
- 21, Kirkcaldy
- 22, Kirkcudbright
- 23, Lewis and Harris
- 24, Lochaber
- 25, Lochgilphead
- 26, Newton Stewart
- 27, North Ayrshire
- 28, Oban
- 29, Orkney Islands
- 30, Peterhead
- 31, Shetland Isles
- 32, Skye and Ullapool
- 33, St Andrews
- 34, Stranraer
- 35, Sutherland
- 36, Thurso
- 37, Uists and Barra
- 38, Wick

Note: Fisheries Dependent Areas were derived from Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) 1991

\*Fisheries employment as a % of total TTWA employment\*

### Legend

Fisheries Dependent Areas

#### Scale

- 15% and Over
- 10 - 15%
- 5 - 10%
- 2 - 5%
- Under 2%

Scale 1: 2,550,000

Sources:

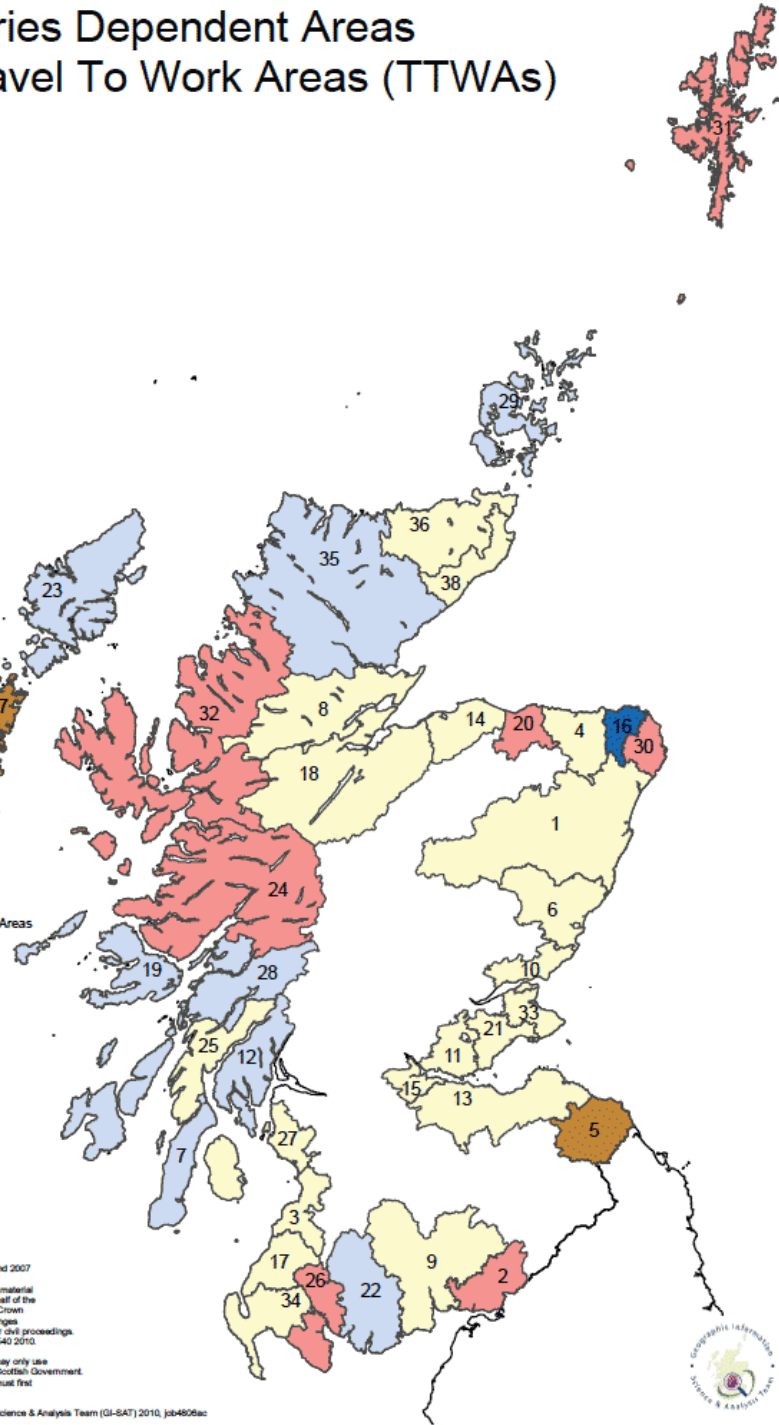
Travel To Work Areas, ONS 1991 Census

Fisheries Dependency Data, SG Marine Scotland 2007

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Scottish Government Geographic Information Science & Analysis Team (GIS-SAT) 2010, job4809ac



Source: Scottish Government 2010

Figure 2.1: Map of Scotland showing location of Fisheries Dependent Areas

The Fraserburgh area is the most 'fisheries dependent area' in Scotland according to national statistics, being the only place to have more than 15% of its workforce involved in the fishing industry (Scottish Government, 2010). In 2010 it employed 789 fishermen, the highest number out of all the fishing districts in Scotland, and landed over 12,000 tonnes of shellfish, making it the largest shellfish port in the UK. Together with its small neighbouring harbours it is the registered base to more than 50% of the North East fleet with a total of 214 vessels (Scottish Government, 2011). As one of 18 port districts in Scotland, Fraserburgh's port has one of the highest volumes of landings from foreign vessels, and is home to a mixed fleet of demersal, pelagic and shellfish boats. As a result, Fraserburgh can be seen as a 'critical' case study of a fisheries dependent area. Whilst choices for all the case study areas evolved and were confirmed through time as the research progressed, it was clear that Fraserburgh was a good start for the research.

On the west coast the fishing fleet is more dispersed with numerous ports taking shares of the west coast catch. The whole of the Outer Hebrides archipelago was chosen as the second case study. Stornoway in Lewis has one of the largest fishing harbours on the west side of Scotland, whilst the islands of Uist and Barra in the southern Outer Hebrides are in the top three areas in Scotland (the other two areas being Fraserburgh and Berwickshire), with a level of employment dependence in excess of 10% on the fishing industry. It has been argued that the nature of the Western Isles' economy and employment means fisheries is a key sector (Scottish Government, 2010). The Outer Hebrides employed 440 fishermen in 2010, comparable with the number employed in Shetland, but had the largest number of fishing vessels out of all Scottish districts. Meanwhile, together with Campbeltown, the industry in Stornoway made the most number of voyages in 2009 and had one of the highest tonnage and value of landings from UK vessels. Most importantly, the Outer Hebrides gives access to a predominantly small boat inshore fishing fleet, providing a useful contrast to the larger more industrial fleet of Fraserburgh. The Outer Hebrides was therefore chosen to explore the main issues within an inshore context. Whilst Mallaig on the west coast mainland also accommodates a small boat inshore fleet, it was felt that a number of issues from Fraserburgh were likely to appear in Mallaig on the basis of the close connections between the two ports discovered during the data collection in Fraserburgh. The Outer Hebrides then was preferable to Mallaig given that the research was looking for maximum difference between the three case study areas.



After conducting fieldwork in the Outer Hebrides, Shetland was chosen as the third case study – another nationally defined fisheries dependent area in Scotland in terms of catch and employment levels, and an area to bring a northern perspective to the research findings. Whilst more than 70% of the boats are under 10m in Shetland, suggesting most of the fishing is inshore, Shetland shares the bulk of Scotland’s whitefish and pelagic industry with Fraserburgh and Peterhead, and its demersal and pelagic fleet play a key role in supporting the island community. Shetland also has a vast inshore creel fleet to match that found in the Outer Hebrides. Some feel that Shetland has the strongest “traditional” dependence on fisheries because of its remote location in the North Sea, half way between mainland Scotland and Norway. However, the findings from Fraserburgh and the Outer Hebrides had suggested that “community” is made in very different ways in these two “fisheries dependent areas”, so the main aim of going to Shetland was to see how that resolves itself in a place that has all sectors of the industry, including inshore, demersal and pelagic, wrapped together in the same community.

Whilst the Outer Hebrides and Shetland are each geographically separate and self-contained groups of islands off the coast of the Scottish mainland, Fraserburgh is a distinct town on the mainland. The total population of Fraserburgh and its surrounding area is significantly less than that found in either of the island case studies (see Table 2.1). However the number of ports located in the Fraserburgh area is comparable with that of the entire Outer Hebrides archipelago and also in Shetland. Moreover, the total number of fishermen in the Fraserburgh area is nearly twice that of either the Outer Hebrides or Shetland. Whilst the total number of fishermen in the Outer Hebrides and Shetland represent 2% or less of their total populations, the total number of fishermen in the Fraserburgh area represents more than 5% of its total population. That excludes the onshore ancillary businesses and processing factories that service the fishing industry, the employees of which often outnumber those employed in the catching sector, and of which a majority are situated in Fraserburgh and the north east corner of the Scottish mainland more generally.

Table 2.1 gives a statistical overview of the three case study areas from 2010, but also includes figures from 2000 to show how the number of fishermen in all three places has fallen dramatically in ten years, but how the value of landings across the board has risen.

	FRASERBURGH	OUTER HEBRIDES	SHETLAND
Population (2010)	14,695	26,190	22,400
Main port district and number of associated ports (2010)	Fraserburgh 8	Stornoway 13	Lerwick 10
Main employment opportunities (2010)	Local Authority Local school Fisheries Manufacturing NHS Retail	Public services Fisheries and aquaculture Agriculture Construction Textiles Tourism	Public administration Wholesale and Retail Fisheries and aquaculture Transport/communications Health/education/social work Construction
Total number of fishermen (2010)	789	440	448
Total number of fishermen (2000)	1,218	627	637
Total number of active vessels (2010)	214 (10m and under – 101 Over 10m – 113)	247 (10m and under – 193 Over 10m – 54)	187 (10m and under – 138 Over 10m – 49)
Value of landings (£000) 2010 (2010 prices)	Demersal – 9,940 Pelagic – 6,601 Shellfish – 29,676 Total - 46,217	Demersal – 160 Pelagic – 0 Shellfish – 9,631 Total - 9,792	Demersal – 22,770 Pelagic – 53,636 Shellfish – 5,876 Total - 82,282
Value of landings (£000) 2000 (2010 prices) <sup>4</sup>	Demersal – 15,046 Pelagic – 3,631 Shellfish – 15,353 Total – 34,030	Demersal – 502 Pelagic – 0 Shellfish – 9,469 Total – 9,971	Demersal – 15,383 Pelagic – 8,608 Shellfish – 2,006 Total – 25,997
Main species targeted according to value (2010)	Nephrops Mackerel Monks Haddock Squid Scallops	Nephrops Lobster Scallops Brown crab Velvet crab Crawfish	Mackerel Cod Monks Haddock Scallops Herring
Volume of landings (Tonnes) 2010	Demersal – 7,221 Pelagic – 7,999 Shellfish – 12,947 Total – 28,166	Demersal – 107 Pelagic – 0 Shellfish – 3,043 Total – 3,150	Demersal – 13,952 Pelagic – 74,394 Shellfish – 2,244 Total – 90,590
Volume of landings (Tonnes) 2000	Demersal – 11,812 Pelagic – 17,078 Shellfish – 6,002 Total – 34,892	Demersal – 581 Pelagic – 0 Shellfish – 3,455 Total – 4,036	Demersal – 19,956 Pelagic – 40,178 Shellfish – 1,571 Total – 61,705
Total number of people employed in fish processing (2010)	Not known	104	297

Source: Scottish Government (2000; 2011); Aberdeenshire Council (2011; 2012); General Register Office for Scotland (2012)

*Table 2.1: Statistical overview of Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland*

<sup>4</sup> The value of landings figures for the year 2000 have been recalculated to take into account inflation at the time of the research, using GDP deflator at market prices where the calendar year 2010=100. GDP deflators from HMT. [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data\\_gdp\\_fig.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/data_gdp_fig.htm) [Accessed 25 March 2013]

Each case study played a distinctive role in the research process. The first case study in Fraserburgh was about identifying the problems. The second case study in the Outer Hebrides was about exploring the issues further and in a completely different context. The third case study in Shetland sought to seek out answers to the issues that had arisen from the previous two cases. Shetland was a good place to do this because its fishing industry is in many ways seen as ahead of other areas: it has its own inshore Regulating Order which means it has a high level of jurisdiction over its inshore fishing, its people play key roles in European fisheries policy and management, and Shetlanders are often viewed as offering a long-term perspective. Shetland is also home to a dynamic and active fisheries research laboratory, the North Atlantic Fisheries Centre (NAFC), that is keen to investigate how to model or predict the social consequences of management decisions.

### **2.3 Collecting the data: how time was spent in the field**

In all three case studies a combination of one-on-one in-depth interviews and participant observation was used to capture the stories of people living in coastal communities and working in the fishing industry about their lives, households, involvement with the fishing industry and experience in the wider community. This combination of data collection methods was useful because it meant that interpretations made in the participant observation could be checked out with people in the interviews, and vice versa.

A large amount of data was gathered, including 60 hours of formal interview material from 38 individuals. The research inspired a lot of interaction from both the fishing and non-fishing sectors of the community. Insights were provided through spending time with local people, particularly in their homes or at their places of work. All the data was collected between November 2010 and July 2011. I stayed at local guest houses and made my way around by foot and public transport, or with hosts and interviewees in their cars. In this way I met and talked to many different people, some with whom I spent an entire morning or afternoon, learning how to make nets, process scallops, drive the lifeboat etc.

### **2.3.1 Interviewing**

Between 12 and 14 interviews were conducted within each of the three case study areas with fishermen, relatives of fishermen, harbour tradesmen, fish processors and buyers, local businesses, local council employees and local residents (see Table 2.2). All the interviewees lived or worked in Fraserburgh or Peterhead, the Outer Hebrides or Shetland. Interviewees included people who either (a) worked in the industry<sup>5</sup> at the time of the interview; (b) had strong connections to the industry by having worked in the fishing industry in the past, or had a close family member who had been involved in the industry, either at the time of interview or in the past; or (c) had no known involvement with the fishing industry. The interviews tended to last between one and two hours each. Names and contact details of potential interviewees were provided prior to entering the field by members of the SFC community sub-group, many of whom also lived or worked in the area. In the field, further names were acquired through the ‘snowballing’ technique described by Cook and Crang (1995), which involved the initial contacts providing names of further contacts, and those further contacts providing more names, and so on.

The research involved the use of sensitive economic, social and personal data as a result of the use of ethnography and in-depth interviews. I gained informed consent from the interviewees to interview them for the purposes of this research prior to the interview. This involved either an initial telephone discussion prior to meeting or, in the majority of cases, a discussion upon meeting for the first time, explaining that the research aimed to find out what fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ meant to them in order to understand the social aspects of Scotland’s fisheries, and to make their social situation within their coastal community clearer to a wider audience, including those who make fisheries policy. Anonymity and confidentiality was explained to them, including a discussion of how the data would be stored, how it would be used, and for how long it would be kept. They knew that I was from the University of Newcastle and had worked in the past at the Scottish Government. An informed consent form was handed out that included information about the research and my contact details. After reading the consent form, the interviewees were asked if they were happy to proceed. The interviewees were then encouraged to ask questions throughout the interview, and anytime afterwards through email or by telephone.

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<sup>5</sup> The ‘industry’ in this research includes the catching sector, the processing sector, onshore trades and businesses and fisheries consultants and representatives.

<b>FRASERBURGH</b>	<b>OUTER HEBRIDES</b>	<b>SHETLAND</b>
1. Harbour tradesman*	1. Inshore creel skipper	1. Whitefish skipper
2. Local council employee	2. Fish processor	2. Fisherman's wife
3. Local resident	3. Inshore creel skipper	3. Fisheries representative
4. Local council employee	4. Local community figure	4. Fish buyer
5. Fisherman's wife	5. Fish processor	5. Local resident
6. Fishery officer	6. Fish buyer	6. Business manager
7. Fish agent	7. Inshore creel skipper	7. Pelagic skipper
8. Pelagic skipper	8. Retired fisherman	8. Fisherman's wife
9. Prawn trawler skipper	9. Inshore trawler skipper	9. Marine engineer
10. Prawn trawler skipper	10. Teacher	10. Harbour tradesman
11. Harbour tradesman	11. Local resident	11. Fisheries representative
12. Harbour tradesman	12. Local council employee	12. Local council employee
		13. Inshore skipper
		14. Fisheries representative

\*Harbour tradesmen include ship chandlers, ships electricians, harbour engineers and haulage operators

*Table 2.2. Summary of the case study interviewees*

I began the interviews by asking the interviewees about their households, and then about their community. Sometimes it was easiest to begin by asking them about their involvement with the fishing industry, particularly where I had not met them before. I asked about their jobs, their parents' histories and their own life histories. I asked them about their identities and about how they saw their community's identity, and the extent to which fishing played a role in this. The empirical data were to be used to deepen understandings of social conditions within the fishing industry and coastal communities in Scotland, to help those involved in fisheries management better understand the impacts of policy decisions on coastal communities, and to suggest how development prospects in these areas might be better supported.

In order to gather data that would achieve this, initial themes and prompts for the interviews were developed from previous research literature and mapped out on a crib sheet that was used in the interviews to ask questions. In Fraserburgh the crib sheet had prompts relating to

‘household’, ‘community’, ‘identity’ and ‘resilience’. I used it less and less as I became familiar with the themes and found certain conversational points kept coming up. However, the crib sheet was useful for making sure that all the points were covered with each interviewee, despite their different expertise and experiences. In the Outer Hebrides I found the prompt sheet did not work at all. People had all sorts of things they wanted to tell me about inshore fishing and were less enthusiastic to talk about their households or identity. By the time I reached Shetland, whilst the crib sheet was still used to make sure the main points were covered, the interviews were often lengthy informal conversations about the key themes that had come up in the Outer Hebrides and Fraserburgh. I made specific efforts to challenge the views I had heard from Fraserburgh and the Outer Hebrides with people in Shetland. And much of the ‘chat’ in Shetland was speculating about possible differences between the three case study areas.

People’s life stories, as a form of memory (Wilkinson, 2009), were elicited in the interview process, as a method of capturing any impacts of fisheries policy and to give insight into the ‘community’ and its members. Rather than trying to prove or disprove a hypothesis, I asked open-ended questions about what fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ meant to people. The “truths” that people gave in the interviews were the truths of their experiences, neither open to proof nor self-evident. As a result, they could be understood only through interpretation, which was partial, and therefore used only for enlargement of understanding (Riessman, 2002, p.235). Therefore taping and transcribing the interviews was essential to ensure that my own interpretations did not eliminate the evidence provided by the interviewees.

Interviewees were asked about their personal lives but also asked to reflect on notions of the ‘fishing household’, the ‘fishing community’, the ‘boundaries’ of their community, and identities of ‘locals’ and ‘incomers’. Throughout the course of the interviews I did more and more checking of my own interpretations of what people had been telling me, such that the interviews covered not just the interviewee’s own thoughts on their households and community, but also what they thought of the themes that I was beginning to identify. In this way, a combination of both ‘experience-near’ and ‘experience-distant’ interviewing methods were used (Pahl, 2005), where original ideas were collected from the interviewees themselves, whilst at the same time an exploration could occur of those concepts and conclusions that had either been taken from previous research or that I had made following

interpretation of the ideas that had come directly from the interviewees. I encouraged respondents to tell their stories on their own, from their own experience, but also intercepted and gave feedback and interpretation of what was being said. A key part of the data collection, then, was that I made interpretations about what they were saying and what I was seeing, and checked these interpretations out with the respondents, thus revising and deepening interpretations to get closer to understanding the experiences of respondents. As a result the findings have multiple layers of interpretation, resulting in a “thick description” of life in Scottish fishing communities (Geertz, 1973).

There were occasional difficulties with the interviews that, on reflection, allowed deeper insights to emerge (Nairn et al., 2005). For example, in one of the case studies I interviewed a man in his house late one evening when I was tired and feeling a little uncomfortable. When I came to transcribe the interview I noticed that during the interview I had not been able to engage easily with what he was saying, and the quality of the data was poor as a result. For example, when this interviewee explained that his grandfather, who was a fisherman, had moved to the case study area at the start of the 1900s, I did not ask him where his grandfather had moved from. I moved on to my next question, because I was struggling to take things in and keep my focus on what he was saying. During the transcription process, as I listened back to the information he was giving, I wanted to know more and felt enormously frustrated with myself for not following up on many things. Most of his answers were very short, often just a word or a sentence, and he did not engage with me very much. He was telling me things that with a bit more effort I would probably have understood better and been able to ask more pertinent questions. However this ‘failed’ interview was illuminating for understanding the feelings that arise when someone living in the community encounters one who knows little about the realities of living and working there.

### ***2.3.2 Participant observation***

The interviews were supported by informal conversations with 119 different people from a range of fishing and non-fishing backgrounds, including local fishery officers, community services workers, net-makers, shop owners, processing factory managers, guest house owners, and people at the fish market (see Table 2.3). At least half of these people were spoken to in-depth for half an hour or longer, and often on multiple occasions. In addition, personal observations were made in the towns and villages, the rural areas, fish factories, local businesses and trades, the harbour, and public life more generally.

### **CASE STUDY 1: FRASERBURGH (NOVEMBER 2010)**

The Fraserburgh case study involved interviews with 12 people: 3 skippers, 2 fishermen's wives/partners, 2 local Council workers, 1 local Rotary Club member, 1 Fish Agent and 3 ships' tradesmen. The interviews tended to last between 1.5 to 2 hours. The case study also incorporated conversations with 37 people from a range of fishing and non-fishing backgrounds in Fraserburgh. Many of these conversations lasted half an hour or longer and took place on several different occasions. Personal observations took in the town centre, the town periphery, neighbouring towns and villages, a range of fish processing factories and trades by the harbour, harbour life generally, town life generally, and a trip to Peterhead.

### **CASE STUDY 2: THE OUTER HEBRIDES (MARCH 2011)**

The Outer Hebrides case study involved interviews with 12 people: 5 skippers, 3 fish processors/buyers/sellers, 1 local resident, 1 local teacher, 1 retired Port Authority employee and 1 local council employee. The interviews tended to last between 40 minutes to 1.5 hours. The case study also incorporated conversations with 60 people from a range of fishing and non-fishing backgrounds in the Outer Hebrides. Many of these conversations lasted half an hour or longer and took place on several different occasions. Personal observations took place across the islands of Barra and Vattersay, South Uist and Eriskay, North Uist and Grimsay, Harris and Scalpay, and finally in Stornoway and Lewis.

### **CASE STUDY 3: SHETLAND (JULY 2011)**

The Shetland case study involved interviews with 14 people: 1 whitefish skipper, 1 pelagic skipper, 1 inshore skipper, 2 fishermen's wives, 1 fish buyer, 1 museum archivist, 3 onshore ancillary services managers, 3 fisheries representatives and 1 local council employee. The interviews tended to last between one and two hours. The case study also incorporated conversations with 22 people from a range of fishing and non-fishing backgrounds in Shetland. Many of these conversations lasted half an hour or longer. Personal observations took place throughout Shetland, including Burra, Whalsay, Yell, the South Mainland, the North Mainland and Lerwick.

*Table 2.3: Summary of data collection from the three case study areas*

Participant observation allowed for shared first-hand experience of the environment, routine activities and everyday conversations of people in the field. Information and reflections were recorded at the time of participation in a field diary and transposed into typed accounts at a later date (see Table 2.4). The typed accounts enabled the incorporation of a wider range of perspectives into the research than would have been possible using the interview transcripts alone. My ethnography turned out to be a strong source of data to support the key conceptual themes and ideas from the literature and the interviews. It was helpful for generating a thick description of the case study areas. Also, it allowed the overall sample to be made up of both



interviewed and non-interviewed people, such that there was less bias towards the fishing industry. This is because many of the interviewees were determined by members of the SFC communities subgroup. However, including data gathered during my travel experiences and accommodation stops more generally avoided certain populations being more prominent than others.

As well as using a research diary during the case study research, I kept one throughout the research process to record thoughts and experiences and reflect back on what was done and learnt outside of the academic institution. For example, an entry was made following a visit to a fishery office prior to conducting the case study research. In this way the research diary was an important tool for facilitating knowledge transfer, helping me to communicate thoughts and experiences to industry representatives, government officials and academic supervisors at meetings.

## **2.4 Data Analysis**

Having completed the work in the field it was then necessary to turn the primary data - the interview recordings and field notes - into secondary data sources to be used in the analysis. The aim of the analysis was to identify key themes and tell the stories held within the data.

### ***2.4.1 Typing up the field notes and transcribing the interviews***

The first task was to transfer the field note jottings into Word documents that could be cut and pasted into analysis software later. The second task was to transcribe the interview recordings. This was time consuming and laborious. It took about an hour to transcribe 15 minutes of conversation. As a result it was vital to use the right equipment – a transcription pedal and simple software. It was necessary to fully transcribe the interviews because of how the data was to be used. The interviews were not to act as an aide memoire, the research diary served that purpose. As a result it was not sufficient to simply listen to the interviews and just take notes of key points and transcribe only relevant paragraphs. I wanted to do a much fuller and more comprehensive analysis of the data, and this required complete transcriptions of the interviews. An advantage to this is that I got to know the data very well and was able to capture numerous ideas that could have been lost easily the first time through listening back.

I flew to Barra on Thursday 10th March 2011. The plane was a 17-seater De Hallivand Canadian Twin Otter (DHCT) that took off from Glasgow airport shortly after 1pm and powered its way through gale force winds over the Clyde, Jura, Colonsay, Mull, Iona and Tiree before approaching a dark cluster of low lying islands. As Barra came into view, I watched the sea underneath the plane get shallower and shallower, until finally it broke on to a beach in waves. With seaweed and shells whizzing past the wheels, I marvelled as the plane touched the sand and ran for a few seconds before coming to a complete stop. The co-pilot then got up out of her seat and turned to face her ten passengers, welcoming us to Barra in both Gaelic and English before helping an elderly man at the back of the plane to dismount.

Walking out of the airport terminal I was greeted by a hailstone or two in the eye. My luggage was sitting by itself on a metal table underneath a plastic wind and rain protector, and facing the table was a small white minivan, stationary but with its engine running. I could see faces staring out of it at me. To my horror I realised it was the local bus, waiting for me. I embarked, and we set off on the 25 minute journey down the length of the island to the large settlement of Castlebay, passing highland cows and sheep on the way who were either grazing freely by the side of the road or stood in the very middle of the road watching our approach, and subsequent brake, with interest. There were three other passengers on the bus. One was a teacher from the south west mainland who had come to teach at the local school for the day; one, from the Royal Bank of Scotland, was there for the day on business; and the fourth passenger was a hosteller like myself, who was on holiday in March “just to see what it is like at this time of the year”.

On arriving at the hostel I met three workmen who had been in Barra since the autumn doing specialised painting on the Castlebay pier. They had intended to leave in November but the weather in the Outer Hebrides had been so bad over the winter that they were still at the hostel at the beginning of March trying to get the job finished. By 4pm I was in the lounge of the hostel calling the contacts for Barra I had been given by a fisheries representative at the last Scottish Fisheries Council community’s subgroup. I made arrangements with the first two people on the list for the following day. I then called the third contact - a fisherman and coxswain of the local lifeboat. He asked if I was free the following day as well and when I told him I wasn’t he came down there and then to pick me up. He took me on a 20 minute drive to his home on the island of Vattersay. On the way we passed more cows and sheep, often having to slow down or stop for the ones that had ventured onto the middle of the road. As we were coming down a grassy hill with the sea stretching out on the left hand side, the fisherman stopped the car abruptly. On the right, a man was herding some cows on the side of the hill. The fisherman jumped out of the car and started talking to him in Gaelic. Then he came back into the car and leaned over to the dash board to grab a cheque, saying to me “I’ve been meaning to give him this all week”. He then went back out to give the man the cheque. We carried on, passing a school on the right where he told me his wife had gone to school, whilst a brilliant white sandy bay curved round ahead of us to the left. This was the start of Vattersay, renowned for being one of the most beautiful parts of the Western Isles.

Just before we reached the fisherman’s house he pulled the car in to a dirt driveway on the right. There was a small shed and seven large cows behind a wire fence. He said he needed to “feed the cows”, and sure enough proceeded to go inside the shed, come out with a barrel of hay and start breaking it up and throwing it over the fence to the cows. I went in after him for the second load and helped him throw the hay over. He told me that he feeds the cows every day when he comes back from fishing. He and his family own the cows. They are free to graze around the island but will always come back at night time, he said, for the hay feed. One of them had just calved so there were now eight cows. He said most people in Vattersay owned cows or sheep like this, mostly just as a hobby, and that it was typical for the fishermen in Barra to come home at night and go and feed the cows before settling down for an evening.

Having fed the cows, we drove another 50 yards down the road, passing his house on the left and carrying on to the beach to see the slipway where the local fishing boats came in to land, and where there were lobster storage tanks below the surface of the water to keep the shellfish alive and fresh for the ‘Christmas market’. Then we went to his house. The fisherman’s wife was there and the three of us sat and chatted. The wife was from Vattersay and all her family lived there. This fisherman and his wife had two children: a teenage son and a two year old daughter, and they were expecting their third child. The fisherman was from North Bay originally, where Barra’s main fishing harbour is, but was living in Vattersay because he said “you won’t get [name of wife] out of Vattersay”. The couple spoke in Gaelic to each other and to their children, but in English to me. When asked about that, the couple explained that most people who spoke Gaelic in their households were bilingual in Gaelic and English, since everyone learned English off the television and in school.

*Table 2.4: An example of a field diary extract from the Outer Hebrides*

### ***2.4.2 Coding the data***

There were multiple rounds of analysis within the research process. Having created the secondary data sources, I then created a Code Map to analyse the data thematically (see Figure 2.2). To do this I produced a first set of ‘codes’ (Cook and Crang, 1995) from the literature review and the interview questions, my initial observations from the field, and my initial analyses<sup>6</sup>. The Code Map then is a conceptual framework on existing notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ derived from policy and social science literature and also preparatory fieldwork notes. It was useful because through systematically exposing the interview transcripts and field notes to these codes, and with the help of NVivo software, further codes and sub-codes emerged at later stages of the analysis that required returning to the original Code Map in order to reorganise and make sense of the data, and also to keep in touch with those concepts from the literature that were already understood and accessible to fisheries policy makers and managers.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011 I sat in front of my code map with a research colleague and drew out the overarching themes from the map. After some discussion, I decided upon four ‘parent’ codes: ‘Place’, ‘Commitment’, ‘Solidarities’ and ‘Power and Conflict’. I then found ten sub-codes for each of these four parent codes. The sub-codes were produced through discussion with my colleague, who sat down with me in front of the code map and asked me questions such as “What do you mean by ‘Commitment’? What did you find in the field?”. My responses included things like ‘financial investment for kin’, ‘24 hour availability’, ‘community investment in the industry’, ‘a deep level of skill specialization’, ‘risking one’s life on a daily basis’, and ‘persistence under difficult conditions to include uncertainty, external threats, and changing markets’. For ‘Power and Conflict’ I highlighted ‘feeling marginalised’ and ‘restricted access to fisheries’ as core themes in the field. For ‘Place’ I told him that ‘place-based identity’, ‘the importance of the sea’ and ‘family history’ were emerging themes, and so on.

The next stage of the analysis involved exposing the three sets of field notes and 38 interview transcripts to the sub-codes listed under the four broad themes using Nvivo software. This was a rigorous process that involved making practical judgements along the way. The Nvivo coding process began on 28<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

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<sup>6</sup> The initial analyses involved a three to four page summary of first impressions and key themes following each case study and proved to be an important stage of the analysis for capturing key insights.



As each interview transcript was exposed to the codes, further parent codes and sub-codes were added where pieces of data did not fit the existing code list. For example, after coding the first two interview transcripts from Fraserburgh, two new parent codes had emerged: 'Fraserburgh' and 'Identity'. The 'Fraserburgh' code housed data relating to the spatial dimensions of the town and community, and non-fishing related things. However by the time I had finished applying all 12 interviews and field notes to the codes on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012, the 'Fraserburgh' and 'Identity' data has been amalgamated back into the four original parent codes, such that information relating to the spatial picture was now stored under 'Place', and information relating to identity was stored under 'Solidarities', signifying how my thought process and understanding of the data evolved as the data was being analysed.

When I came to expose the Outer Hebrides data to the codes I continued to change and amalgamate the code list where necessary. I began by using the original code list derived on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, but added the new codes that had arisen from the Fraserburgh analysis. For example, the sub-code 'incomers' had been added to the 'Solidarities' list. I chose this method because I felt that the resulting list of codes from the Fraserburgh analysis was more realistic to the data than the ones I had first developed on 22<sup>nd</sup> December. However I kept my 'brainstormed' sub-codes next to me as I coded the Outer Hebrides data in the event that some of the ones that had not worked for Fraserburgh needed to come back in for the Outer Hebrides, or in the event that some of the sub-codes that had been moved between the parent codes needed to be moved back.

The process of coding helped me to deepen my understanding of the data. For example, I found that information relating to 'identity' and 'specialization' became increasingly difficult to separate as I coded the data, helping me realise that both were closely intertwined. In another example, at the end of coding the Fraserburgh data I realised that the thesis was going to be about discussing the contradictions inherent within Scottish fishing communities, since 'contradictions' was emerging as an important finding and something that might challenge simplistic understandings of the fishing 'community'. After the first Outer Hebrides interview I realised that 'leaving the industry' was emerging as a key finding, and when I started analysing the Shetland interviews I realised a new sub-code of 'aspirations' was needed, which I put under 'Shetland Place'. Many of the Shetland respondents spoke about where they wanted their own lives, and Shetland as a place, to go in the future. This sort of information was less apparent in the Fraserburgh and Outer Hebrides material. I again felt

this was significant to the research findings in that Shetland stands out from Fraserburgh and the Outer Hebrides by having distinctive aspirations.

Having coded each of the case study areas individually, the next stage of the analysis was to return to my original code map and code across the places. I put my code map on the floor, together with a smaller one made up of my field work preparatory materials and my interview schedule, and pulled out the sub-codes from the three case studies that had been created during the NVivo round of analysis. I started with the sub-codes listed under the parent code of 'Solidarities' and correlated 17 of them with the information relating to 'Solidarities' on the code maps. I then moved to the 'Power and Conflict' sub-codes, and pulled out 19 that correlated with the information on 'Power and Conflict' on the code map. For 'Place', 22 sub-codes were identified, and for 'Commitment', it was 21 (see Table 2.5). I then wrote the names of these sub-codes on pieces of card and coloured them according to parent code. So, for example, things relating to 'Place' were written in purple, things related to 'Commitment' were in orange, etc. By doing this, I noticed that there was a grouping of sub-codes developed during the Nvivo round of analysis that did not fit clearly into the four parent codes on the code map, but that had a place on the code map nevertheless that seemed important. These sub-codes related to being in the industry and working in the industry. So when I came to write these sub-codes on cards I wrote them in brown, thus creating a new parent category that was not in play during the NVivo round of analysis. So even at this next stage of analysis new findings were emerging from the data.

Once I had finished pulling out all the sub-codes that had emerged from the Nvivo round of analysis with the ideas on the code map, I looked through notes I had made when first drawing up the code map, and a recent draft publication I had written on concepts of 'community' and 'dependency' in Fraserburgh, to see if there were any key findings or themes that had been missed. By doing this, I added six more sub codes:

1. Emotional stress
2. Income
3. Power and competition within markets
4. Danger and risk
5. Public views of the fishing industry
6. Inshore sector

The first two sub-codes, ‘emotional stress’, and ‘income’, I wrote in orange, to fit into the ‘Commitment’ category. The other four I wrote in brown because they fitted in with the new group of codes that was emerging from this round of analysis.

	<b>SOLIDARITIES</b>	<b>POWER AND CONFLICT</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>COMMITMENT</b>
1.	Social Networks	Restricted Access to Fisheries	Degradation of Place	Work Patterns
2.	Business networks and supply chains	Not Trusting Science	Shocks to non-fishing industries	24 Hour work pattern
3.	Communication	Feeling Marginalized	Leaving Villages/Place	Changes in crew
4.	Incomers	Feeling Criminalized	Place Based Poverty	24/7 Availability
5.	Non-solidarity with place	Barriers to Diversification	Regeneration and Development	Training
6.	Solidarity with the fishing industry	Degradation of the fishing industry	Move to oil	Handling money
7.	Solidarity between place and fishing	Other shocks to the fishing industry	Changes to Place	Specialization
8.	Solidarity with place	Struggles with fuel prices	Place-Based identity	Innovation
9.	Solidarity with the sea	Uncertainty	Heritage	Feeling pride for fishing
10.	Solidarity with fishing households	‘capital’ versus ‘community’	Place-based history	Wanting to work in the fishing industry
11.	Solidarity with sea-based occupations	Shocks to place	Family history	Loving fishing
12.	Language	Conflict between people	Description of Physicality	Persistence under difficult conditions
13.	Identity	Conflict within catching sector	Place-Based things	Tied into the fishing industry
14.	Solidarity with people from the same place	Conflict within fishing industry	Place-based events	Leaving the fishing industry
15.	Helping each other out	Conflict between places	Non-fishing industries	What people value
16.	Shared understanding	Place-based opportunities	Aspirations	Family involvement
17.	Non-solidarity with the fishing industry	Perceived barriers to development	Self sufficiency	Household involvement
18.		Competition	Informality	Community financial investment
19.		Inequality	Autonomy	Personal financial investment
20.			Valuing Place	Importance of freedom
21.			Importance of fishing	Feeling pride for place
22.			Importance of the sea	

*Table 2.5: The sub-codes created from the NVivo round of analysis*

I then lay the code map on the floor and started to map out the sub-codes on top of it again, taking each parent category in turn. I started with 'Solidarities', and found that these sub-codes spread out around the code map, and not just in the 'Solidarity' section. I did the same with the sub-codes relating to 'Place', 'Commitment' and 'Power and Conflict', and again found that the codes spread out across the code map into different sections. Finally I placed the brown sub-codes on to the code map. In this way, it was easier to see how a sub-code relating to one parent category could actually relate to other categories on the code map, something that was more difficult to spot during the Nvivo round of analysis.

Having arranged all the sub-codes on the code map, I then turned to the data, which was now in the form of written text on big piles of A4 paper and separated according to 'Place', 'Commitment', 'Solidarity' and 'Power and Conflict', and each case study. I began with the Outer Hebrides data, as this was the least fresh in my mind and therefore felt like the most helpful place to begin. I took the data contained within the 'Solidarities' parent code and began to read each piece of data, or quote, cutting it out from the page and placing it underneath the sub-code that it illustrated, that now lay on top of the code map. In this way I could see where the quote fitted into the big picture. Moving systematically through the four parent codes, I organised all the data from the Outer Hebrides on to the code map, such that I ended up with the code map lying on the floor, the sub-codes lying on top of it, and piles of cut-out quotes placed underneath them (see Figure 2.3).

Eventually a new parent category emerged relating to the 'Fishing Industry'. Often some quotes would speak to more than one sub-code within a parent category. When they did I was able to place both sub-codes on top of the quote and see how these sub-codes related. Many of the sub-codes started to join together, not as one, but as a related point, and turned out to be helpful for writing up the findings. For example, I could say that 'restricted access to fisheries' and 'uncertainty', which had both started out in the 'Power and Conflict' category on Nvivo, when put on the code map fitted together into the 'Fishing Industry' category and also joined with the sub-code 'persistence under difficult conditions', which had started out in the 'Commitment' section. 'Markets' and 'stocks' began to emerge as key resources for Outer Hebrides fishermen as the quotes were being added to the code map such that I felt a sub-code on 'the dependency on prices, fishing opportunities and stocks' was necessary. What I also found was the sub-code 'uncertainty' needed to be expanded to explain that uncertainty in fishing was often talked about as the cause or explanation for someone now





the data to the code map, it emerged that ‘dependency on prices’, ‘fishing opportunities’ and ‘stocks’ was a major finding within the ‘Industry’ parent category. Within the parent category of ‘Place’, ‘work patterns’ and ‘self-sufficiency’ were grouped together, speaking to notions of ‘Commitment’, and so these codes, and the quotes beneath ‘self-sufficiency’ breached the boundary across the parent codes of ‘Place’ and ‘Commitment’. Within ‘Commitment’ there was ‘personal financial investment’ and ‘handling money’ that were joined together. There was also ‘loving fishing’, ‘feeling pride for fishing’, ‘wanting to work in the fishing industry’ and ‘family involvement’, the latter two of which were tied together. When coding ‘Solidarities’, ‘family history’, ‘importance of the sea’, ‘helping each other out’ and ‘what people value’ were all tied together. ‘Identity’ and ‘language’ were also tied together. After Fraserburgh and Shetland, the analysis of Outer Hebrides ‘Place’ data seemed to spread the concepts evenly again around the code map. There were some categories left in ‘Power and Conflict’, many in ‘Place’, several in ‘Household and family commitment’, and a number in ‘Solidarities’. In this way the data revealed that common to conceptions of ‘fishing community’ in the three case studies is the practice of identifying similarities and differences to others, reflecting Cohen’s ideas (Cohen, 1985). Many respondents described solidarities and shared experiences that they saw as bringing people together.

### ***2.4.3 Writing the thesis***

Using the code map produced a lot of research findings. Inevitably not all of these could be communicated in the thesis. The analytical chapters to follow focus on the key themes that came out of the analysis and that go some way to addressing some of the important questions in fisheries policy and management. The main aim of this research is to present evidence on the characteristics and experiences of fishing communities in Scotland, and how they are being affected by, or coping with, fisheries policy decisions. The analytical chapters focus on what seemed most relevant to this aim. The chapter divisions emerged as I did the analysis. I did the first cross-cutting analysis and saw how the codes were beginning to group. Then I thought about how to structure the thesis and present the data in a convenient way for the reader. There are inevitably false distinctions and overlaps between the chapters. The data is thickly descriptive; that is, it has been interpreted on multiple levels by the research subjects and by myself as the researcher. As a result, the chapter breaks aim to offer ease of reading as opposed to clear boundaries or distinctions between the experiences that are being described.

#### ***2.4.4 Discussion of ethical considerations***

The research adopted a mixed methods approach, spanning in-depth interviews and participant observation, and pursued an active programme of discussion and communication with different stakeholders. This type of data collection required internal faculty approval only, as opposed to approval from the National Research Ethics Service or the University Ethical Review Committee. The University of Newcastle's Centre for Rural Economy's Management Board judged that there were no significant ethical considerations over and above the normal questions of honesty, confidentiality, impartiality and independence associated with social science research. Ethical implications have been monitored in more detail in collaboration with the Scottish Government. How I dealt with any sensitive issues was I did things like make provisions for secure data storage, give feedback to participants where possible, and anything else to make sure the research did not harm the participants (Wiles et al., 2008). Anonymity was a fairly fraught issue for the study. The anonymity of interviewees was upheld throughout the research project with pseudonyms replacing actual names, and only I, as the researcher, having access to a password protected database of the actual names and original interview recordings. Any identifying details have been removed in the writing of the thesis and sensitivity has been exercised with regard to potential conflicts between informants when using direct quotes.

#### **2.5 Effecting change in policy**

Having worked in fisheries policy as a government official I was well-placed to gather evidence from fishing communities for policy makers. As a policy officer at the Scottish Government I had witnessed first-hand how 'socio-economic' considerations in fisheries slotted into a base-line policy structure based on biological objectives. Furthermore, at the start of the research, I already had relationships with policy-makers at the Scottish Government and Defra. A key focus of the project was to maintain and build on these links. So as well as carrying out academic tasks and research methods training I also attended Scottish Parliament debates and Scottish Government conferences on policy topics such as the Marine (Scotland) bill and the 2012 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, and wrote short reports on the outcomes of these for academics at Newcastle. I also worked closely with the SFC communities sub-group, attending meetings and exchanging information. Emerging

findings were fed back to fisheries policy makers and industry representatives through the subgroup. As well as the communities subgroup, I sought one-on-one meetings with Scottish Government officials and Scottish fishing industry representatives on a regular monthly basis. At such meetings I was able to discuss and progress the research in line with policy and stakeholder concerns. This allowed me to keep up to date with marine issues and policy making in Scotland.

### ***2.5.1 Sustaining and deepening industry and government relationships***

Throughout the analysis stage I used the contacts I had within Marine Scotland and the Scottish fishing industry to arrange presentations, discuss findings and get feedback from stakeholders. A two-way dialogue with policy-makers at the Scottish Government was crucial to ensuring that the findings of the PhD would have a practical relevance.

The research benefitted from having a non-academic supervisor at the Scottish Government. The non-academic supervisor commented on each stage of the research. A Scottish Government policy official in a non-supervisory role was also consulted on a monthly basis. This policy official worked in the ‘communities’ team and played a key role in the studentship in providing relevant information on the policy context for the study and suggesting relevant contacts and foci for the research. Doing research in collaboration with officials at the Scottish Government allowed a real-world focus to be retained and allowed the work to remain aligned with Scottish Government priorities.

However, there were repercussions of involving other people so closely in the research and these sensitivities had to be negotiated on an on-going basis. When I started to organise my interviews and fieldwork schedule for example, I had to deal with many interests pushing forward specific agendas. For example, after the SFC communities sub group where I presented preliminary findings from the Fraserburgh case study, there was much interest in the work. Inevitably this meant some balancing of interests to include the negotiation of case study areas and the accessing of coastal intermediaries. I had to steer a course between the research aims and fisheries and policy interests. Feelings of being pulled and pushed by policy officials, fishing industry representatives and academics arose occasionally, and when they did they allowed me to reassert and therefore strengthen a path for the research as an independent piece of work that could speak to all.

### *2.5.2 A shift in focus from social impact analysis to cultural awareness*

The initial description of the research project was to explore the meaning, justification and implementation of social objectives within fisheries policy. Theories of territorial rural development and multi-level governance were to be brought together with notions of 'resilience' and 'adaptive capacity' to critically examine the dynamics of defining and acting on social objectives, and the interaction of policy and community life. Whilst much of the original focus of the PhD remains, parts have evolved as the reality of the work has met the aspirations of the initial plans. I was not responsible for the original project proposal, but was appointed subsequently by the ESRC and the Scottish Government. As a result it made sense for me to work through the empirical focus, but where my research would be informed by my policy background.

The original research questions were focused around fisheries policy: what is its impact on social conditions in fishing communities, how are social objectives taken into account in policy formation, and how is evidence on social impact used in policy making. However it was clear in the first few weeks of the research that evidence collection from policy officials was not going to be possible. Early discussions with staff in the Scottish Government had suggested a focus on internal research within the Scottish Government would be tricky in terms of confidentiality and access to internal policy processes. Whilst one option early in the PhD would have been to put a focus on and adopt a very specific policy impact methodology and apply a more technical short term impact analysis around a specific policy, it was clear that getting into the fishing communities from a more interpretive perspective and understanding how social considerations and issues are perceived locally was more fundamental and more useful for the long term. It seemed more valuable to provide a broad based and in-depth analysis of social characteristics and challenges within fishing communities. Part of this is an analysis of what fishing communities themselves perceive policy impacts to have been. However, a significant focus of the thesis is to reflect on the implications of these insights for policy objectives and evidence in the future.

## 2.6 Case study set up

The remainder of this chapter introduces the three case study areas in which the data were collected. The descriptions are based on fieldwork material and an initial analysis of each area conducted at the end of each stage of fieldwork. As a result they draw on a mixture of my own perceptions, as well as views reported to me by local residents. Following these brief descriptions, the findings from the research are presented in three analytical chapters, before Chapters 6 and 7 go on to discuss the implications of the findings for policy making.

### 2.6.1 Fraserburgh, November 2010

In the north east of Scotland the coastal towns and villages are physically and culturally set apart from the rural inland areas. Fraserburgh (see Fig. 2.4), known locally as “The Broch”, has distinct physical boundaries and a place-based identity tied to the coast. Someone coming from a location even just four miles inland would be seen as an “incomer” and would regard themselves as such, as opposed to a “townie”, or a “Brocher”. This would be the case even if this person now lived within the physical town boundaries of Fraserburgh and had been there for years. However, if they had had children born and raised in Fraserburgh then their children would be “Brochers”.



Source: Scottish Government, 2010

Figure 2.4: Map of Fraserburgh and Peterhead

There is a tight cultural bond between the coastal towns and villages around Fraserburgh. Most people share the same family background and history tied to the fishing industry, even if they no longer work in the industry themselves. Many people are related, or married to people from neighbouring coastal villages. Blood bonds often stretch from Rosehearty, incorporating Fraserburgh, and down to St. Combs, sometimes going as far as Peterhead. However each coastal town or village retains a fierce sense of separateness from the other. Someone from the coastal village of Inverallochy would not see themselves as a “Brocher” even if they had commuted the two miles up to Fraserburgh harbour everyday their whole working lives. In a more extreme example, the only thing physically separating the coastal villages of Inverallochy and Cairnbulg is a road, where houses along one side belong to Inverallochy whilst houses on the opposite side belong to Cairnbulg.

Within the Fraserburgh area, to include its surrounding coastal towns and villages, there are few other industries outside of fishing, with the exception of one or two large manufacturing non-fishing related companies in Fraserburgh town and an old airfield outside of Inverallochy. Most people in these towns and villages are from fishing families that have been there for generations and either still work in the industry themselves or are the first generation to come out of it. The same families continue to occupy the houses there, moving only between the coastal towns and villages themselves. The only incomers tend to be the occasional “white settler” (as the locals describe them) from England coming in to retire, or people from the rural hinterlands marrying in.

In Fraserburgh a once vibrant high street was, in 2010, characterised by boarded up buildings. The current decline of the high street shops in Fraserburgh and the smaller community shops in the surrounding coastal villages is viewed by many local people as a consequence of the contraction of the fishing industry in recent years. Many onshore businesses are set up around the catching sector, including the harbour trades such as the boat electricians and painters, the high street butchers and the bakers, the primary fish processing factories, and many community services such as the local college that runs courses in apprenticeships for all the harbour trades as well as skipper courses. Everyone spoken to said all of these businesses are struggling to survive as the catching sector gets smaller and smaller. Those leaving the fishing industry are tending to turn to jobs in the oil industry, which several respondents suggested does not feed local onshore businesses to the same extent.

The onshore businesses associated with the fishing industry are highly specialized, with many feeling in a difficult position to move on to anything else should the fishing industry continue to shrink. The tradesmen that work on the ships tend to have their whole lives invested in the job. Many trades related to the fishing, including the catching sector itself, are struggling to make ends meet currently, and tradesmen reported having to turn away young people from the college looking for apprenticeships because the work is not there. Similarly fish agents have had to turn away local young fishermen who want to start their own boat because the finance is not there to support them. Peoples' enthusiasm for the fishing industry in Fraserburgh is not matched by the opportunities available, and those once confident about the decency and viability of their professions are feeling increasingly stressed.

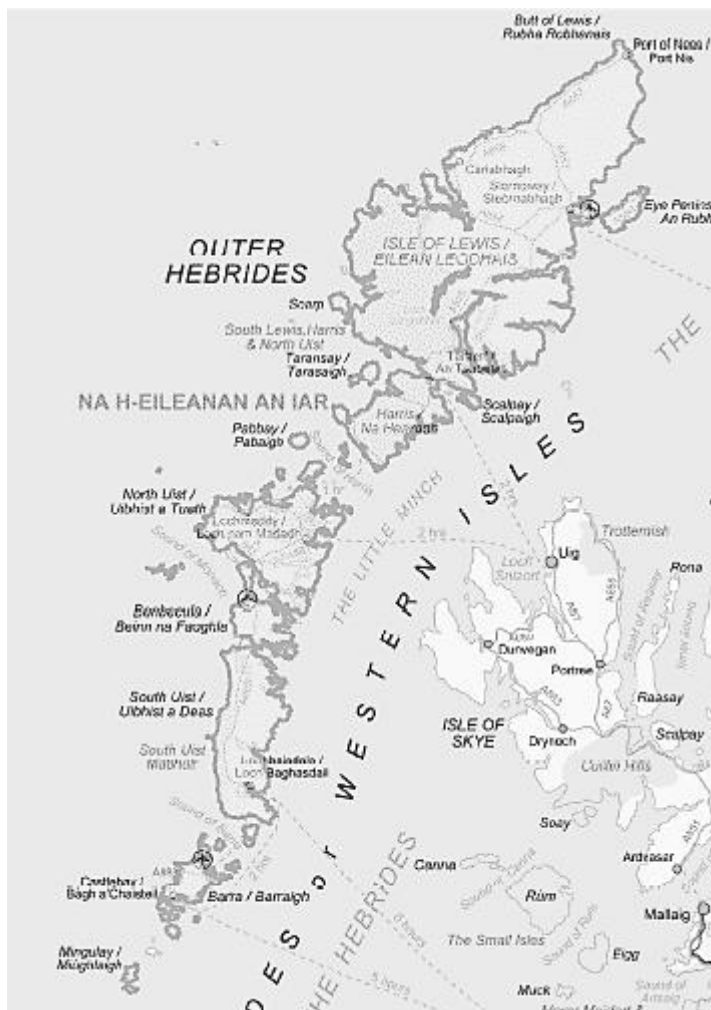
The decline in individual vessel income as a result of increasing costs and quota and effort restrictions appears to have made a huge difference to the way skippers fish. Skippers claimed that they are taking more risks out at sea now – staying out in worse weather or travelling further to find the right fish to make the business work. Some respondents referred to a “dog-eat-dog” attitude amongst skippers, with most concentrating on self-survival above the survival of their crews or the boat. Many local crew members have left the industry, because as more and more restrictions were applied to the vessel they were working on, the wages became less such that as a crew member they were not getting paid enough to make a living. Foreign cheap labour characterises most of the crew structures now. There are language or cultural barriers between skippers and crews that leave skippers often feeling isolated out at sea. For example, one skipper explained that no matter how many times he asks his Filipino crew to call him by his first name, they persist on calling him ‘Sir’ or ‘Captain’. Most trawlers operating out of Fraserburgh now have changed from being predominantly whitefish boats to being prawn boats, whereby around a third of the catch has to be prawns, because there is no longer enough quota to fish for whitefish alone.

### ***2.6.2 The Outer Hebrides, March 2011***

The Outer Hebrides (see Fig. 2.5) are remote islands in the far west of Scotland. From the mainland it is a five hour ferry journey to the southern-most island of Barra, whilst the island of Lewis in the north can be reached in nearly three hours from Ullapool. Ferries to the islands from the mainland are frequently cancelled outside of summer months due to rough seas, and on the islands themselves there are strong persistent winds coming in off the Atlantic that rarely die down. There is a plane to Barra from Glasgow which goes on to



Benbecula in Uist and is more weather-enduring than the ferries. However, that too can also be cancelled in ferocious winds.



Source: Scottish Government, 2010

Figure 2.5: Map of the Outer Hebrides

The Outer Hebrides were traditionally home to crofter-fisherman families, where the main breadwinner worked the land primarily and supplemented the family's income with fishing. People lived and worked on the west side of the islands, since that was where the fertile land could be found, with the east side being rocky and barren. However, during the highland clearances most people in these western fertile areas were thrown off their land. Many emigrated to Canada, or other new world countries; those that stayed were forced to relocate to the barren eastern islands of the archipelago. Since crofting was not an easy option in these eastern parts due to the poor quality of soil, families turned to fishing fulltime for their

livelihoods. A resulting handful of small island 'fishing communities' came into being along the eastern shores: Scalpay in Harris, Grimsay in North Uist and Eriskay in South Uist. Barra in the south and the small hamlet of Stockinish on the east side of Harris are also seen as areas where fishing has historically surpassed crofting as the main livelihood.

The percentage of people employed in the fishing industry in the Outer Hebrides varies from island to island. In Barra and the Uists around 12% of the population work in fishing (Scottish Government, 2011). In Harris and Lewis this number is lower. The fishing fleet is predominantly an inshore, static gear fleet; there are some trawler boats in Barra and Harris, and a few scallop boats in Uist, but outside of Stornoway the fleet is for the most part creel. The creel boats fish very close to the shore, usually within the three-mile limit and are highly sensitive to weather and circumstance. A common practice for the creel boats is to fish for lobsters off the west side of the islands in the summer months from April to September when the weather allows them to get out into the Atlantic. The lobsters are caught and then often stored in cages on the sea bed and fed for several months to keep them alive until the market picks up at Christmas time and they can be sold to Spain for a reasonable price. When the weather changes in the autumn time the boats come round to the east side and fish for velvet crabs and brown crabs, which again go to a mainly Spanish market. The winter months are also spent doing repairs to the boats and the gear.

The main harbour in Barra has an ice making machine and a fish processing factory which supplies fuel to the boats and general ship chandlery. There are about seven prawn trawlers working out of that harbour and about 25 creel boats. South and North Uist specialise in live shellfish and its industry is managed largely through cooperatives. In Grimsay there are 15 local fishermen joined up to the local cooperative, which was set up 30 years ago. Further north in Lochmaddy bay there are about seven fishing boats (five fish for prawns, two for velvet crabs) that work from that harbour in the winter time. In the summer three of the boats leave for the west coast to fish for lobster. In Leverburgh in Harris there were four full time and one part time fisherman at the time of the research. In Stornoway the Local Authority has a department dedicated to inshore fisheries, aquaculture and the marine environment. It works on not just individual businesses but also community projects, including the buy-in to the islands of community quota. In the last five or six years Stornoway's trawler fleet has almost halved in number.

There is other employment on the islands outside of fishing. Locals suggested that the biggest employer is the local authority, followed by the health service, which between them employs around half the islands' population. There are also those who have gone into construction work full-time, and a number who have taken jobs offshore on oil rigs or renewables.

### ***2.6.3 Shetland, July 2011***

Shetland (see Fig. 2.6) is made up of one large island (the “mainland”) surrounded by a few smaller islands (notably Unst, Yell, Skerries, Whalsay, Burra, Foula and Fair Isle). Whalsay and Burra are considered the two traditional “fishing” islands within Shetland where up to 50 years ago up to 90% of their populations were involved in the fishing industry in some way, and probably 90% of those employed in the fishing industry in Shetland lived on either Burra or Whalsay. There were a few other notable “fishing communities” in Shetland, including Cullivoe in Yell, and the Skerries. Interestingly the largest fish markets were based in Lerwick and Scalloway on the ‘mainland’, and today these two towns accommodate most of the fishing fleet and most of the processing factories and ancillary services.

The percentage of the working population employed in the fishing industry in Shetland is around 10% according to statistics (SIC, 2010). However, as on the Scottish mainland, there are certain areas of Shetland where fishing means much more. In Whalsay a local perception is that everything hinges around fishing on the island. One local resident explained that there are seven pelagic boats on the island, each with 11 men which makes 77 men employed in the pelagic sector on Whalsay. There are five to six whitefish boats that employ 40 men between them, and there are ten shellfish men. The crews work using a share system in the boat and “No there’s no Filipinos in Whalsay yet [laughter]” (Pelagic skipper, Shetland). There is also a fish factory that started with whitefish and was, in 2011, just opening up again to process salmon.

There would appear to be a social and cultural distinction between Lerwick and the rest of Shetland. Lerwick is the capital of Shetland and is seen locally as the big town. Someone from Lerwick is called a “Lerwigian” or a “townie”, whilst everyone else is considered a “country yokel”. There is a definite view of Lerwigians as different from those not from Lerwick. People from outside of Lerwick often spoke of Lerwigians wearing particular “city-like” clothes as if they were trying to pretend they were from a big city, and this was often laughed at.



Source: Scottish Government, 2010

*Figure 2.6: Map of Shetland*

The Shetland Islands Council decided to allow large oil companies to build an oil terminal in Sullom Voe in the north of Shetland in 1972 under the condition that the Council received a return for every gallon of oil that came into the terminal. The oil in the North Sea is of one of the highest grades and flowed steadily from 1972 until the 2000s, thus bringing millions of pounds into the Shetland Islands Council. The Council reinvested this money into the Shetland community, lending money to the fishing industry to buy in quota and protect its fleet, also building good quality roads, ferry services and numerous causeways linking once separate islands with the mainland of Shetland. It has also used the money to build eight

superior community leisure centres across Shetland, and fund a ferry service direct to Denmark, although the later has since ceased to operate due to lack of passengers. The islands continue to spend money on hi-tech ventures, such as installing fibre optic cables under its roads for better telecommunications on the islands. However it would seem this level of development has caused a greater need for money on the islands where good quality developments cost a lot to maintain. The oil in the North Sea is now running out and the Council is finding that what was once a “torrent” of money coming in is now a “trickle”. As a result it is looking for alternative opportunities to bring money into the islands and at the time of the research was considering whether or not to go ahead with a large-scale wind farm project that will generate power to sell to the UK’s national grid. There were arguments against the wind farm project from local people but many others agreed that the islands needed to capitalise on their opportunities and that renewables was the way forward.

Shetlanders would appear to be fearless in embracing new ideas and determined to look after Shetland. They described themselves as open, curious, shrewd and self-confident, and saw themselves and their particular qualities in stark contrast to other parts of Scotland. As well as maximising their economic opportunities it is apparent that Shetlanders consistently work together and join forces. Businesses are thriving in Shetland and local people consistently said that there is a job for anyone who wants to work there. Where there was once a traditional fish market in Shetland the onshore businesses joined together to employ qualified professionals to establish an electronic fish auction which has not only improved conditions within the fish market but also increased the prices of the fish. At the time of the research it was one of only two electronic fish markets in the UK. In other examples, a marine engineering company in Lerwick has now joined forces with two other engineering companies to outbid other Scottish companies for work on the Scottish mainland.

Shetland’s population is buoyant with people of working age moving up there to work, both Shetlanders and non-Shetlanders alike. A widespread local perception is that people tend not to move to Shetland to retire, perhaps in contrast to the Western Isles, because it is far away and expensive to get to. Instead people move to Shetland to work, and tend to stay and bring up families there, suggestive of a buoyant economy.

## **2.7 Summary**

In summary, this research is an in-depth qualitative research project that uses case studies in Scotland to generate data on fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ from the perspective of the community residents themselves – data that is so far missing from fisheries management. This chapter has explained how the use of such in-depth qualitative data remains problematic within policy-making. The research therefore insisted on ongoing dialogue with policy officials at the Scottish Government, using cases and contexts that already had strong government relations. The three case study areas chosen were Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland and the methods used in the field involved in-depth interviews and participant observation, a key element of the data collection being a comprehensive research diary. The chapter explains that the data was analysed thematically using coding and NVivo software to capture the stories to come out of the interviews and observations. As mentioned above, it also expands on why a key part of the research process involved close relationship with policy officials at the Scottish Government. Finally the chapter has presented initial summaries of the three case study areas with which to contextualise the following in-depth research findings on notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ in Scotland.

This thesis now presents the key findings from Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland under three broad chapter themes of ‘practices’, ‘meanings’ and ‘contradictions’ before returning, in Chapter 6, to the issue of fisheries policy and possible implications that the research findings have for policy development.

## Chapter 3. Everyday social and occupational routines

### 3.1 Introduction

Previous investigations of some of the more intimate facets of human activity in fishing areas have revealed how cultural values and practices are formed and passed on through a fishing occupation and the daily routines that it involves (Nadel-Klein, 2003, 2000; van Ginkel, 2001; Nuttall, 2000; Thompson et al., 1983). In the north east of Scotland specifically, fishing has been described as a forum through which community bonds, knowledge, language and traditions are established, confirmed and socially reproduced (Nuttall, 2000, p.56). In thinking about what determines a coastal or fishing ‘community’ and how people living in them ‘depend’ on fishing, Anthony Cohen’s symbolic concept of ‘community’, as “that entity to which one belongs, greater than kinship but more immediate than the abstraction we call “society”” (Cohen, 1985, p.15), has been linked to customs among fishers in both their home and work organisation and practices.

This chapter investigates the particular social and occupational routines, or sets of practices, that bring people together in Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland and the extent to which those routines are tied to the fishing industry. The chapter begins by discussing features of daily work and life in the fishing industry in Scotland and the extent to which these routines not only unite people who work in the sector, but also impact on the wider community. The chapter goes on to discuss closeness and trust between people who work in the fishing industry and, again, the extent to which this pervades the wider community. The third section explores the extent to which intergenerational practices apparent in the three case study areas have led, and continue to lead, to socialisation into the fishing industry. Finally, the chapter looks at the role of crofting and fishing in bringing about a sense of self-sufficiency in the everyday routines of the ‘communities’.

Whilst this chapter explores the everyday practices that bring people together, it also begins to expose heterogeneity occurring within the ‘communities’, and the different groups of people who share social and occupational routines in the case study areas. In doing so, the chapter brings attention to the complex nature of any understandings of the ‘fishing community’ in Scotland, a theme which will be explored later in the thesis. Moreover, by illuminating the perspectives of people living in the communities this chapter describes some

of the different motivations behind why people do what they do. Do people fish to maintain a culture, or is it about economics, or social reproduction, or a combination of these?

### **3.2 Living and working in the fishing industry**

Living and working in the fishing industry involves established, age-old routines of danger, uncertainty, flexible response and an intense indivisibility of work and home life that illuminates a unique level of personal commitment to the occupation of fishing and its way of life.

#### ***3.2.1 Working round the clock***

Holding a job in the fishing industry involves a daily routine that is characterised by uncertainty and spontaneity. Regardless of whether or not a fishing vessel is moored-up at night time, or if the nature of catching certain species of shellfish, whitefish or pelagic fish means that vessels operate around the clock, working in the industry tends to demand 24 hour attention, with fishermen working through the night as well as in the day. As a result, many respondents referred to antisocial hours and late night working inherent in the fishing industry, describing how they could not “switch off” from the job ever. For example, one skipper in Fraserburgh reported that he slept with his mobile phone beside him:

“You get a phone call at like three o clock in the morning from the relief skipper, “oh I’ve got a problem on the boat”, so you can never actually just switch off... you sleep with your mobile phone beside you” Prawn skipper, Fraserburgh

Similarly, an inshore fisherman in Shetland described how he took his mobile phone with him on holiday in order to keep up to date with what was happening with the fishing:

“I’ll just switch off as much as I can. But I know this (gestures to mobile phone) [will] be going flat out, there’ll be people telling me how many boxes of squid they had and I’ll keep in touch just to know, cos you have to keep your finger on the button” Scallop fisherman, Shetland

A commitment to working round the clock was also demonstrated by onshore businessmen who serviced the fishing vessels. A ships electrician in Fraserburgh described how it was common for him to receive calls “24 hours a day, middle of night” from skippers out at sea who were having problems with the electrics on their boats and were in danger. Meanwhile a



fish processor in the Outer Hebrides suggested that one never really leaves the job as a result of being unable to predict when they were going to be working or not:

“A lot of folk, when they’ve finished five o’ clock, they go home and that’s it, they put their feet up. I don’t. I can be at home and get a phone call at eight o’ clock that there’s one of the boats coming in, there’s something wrong with them and he’s wanting something and they know that I’ll come out and do it... I know all the boys that are in the fishing and they know me and they know they can phone me at any time” Fish factory manager, the Outer Hebrides

So working 24 hours, and allowing work to spill over into home life, is a necessity for working in the fishing industry. It appeared that those who could not demonstrate this kind of commitment to the job did not last long:

“You just need somebody really committed to make a boat work and they’ve got to be so committed that any little chink, any thought of doing something else or, going away travelling for the summer or anything daft like that is, you can forget it... every opportunity you get to go fishing you’ve got to go fishing. It’s as simple as that” Fishing cooperative manager, the Outer Hebrides

### ***3.2.2 The importance of flexibility and adaptive response***

Flexibility also emerged as an important feature of the fishing industry, where a high level of adaptability and multi-tasking is demanded by the job:

“If you were paying boatyard prices for the repairs we have to do out here you would never be still in business. So I have to be kind of adaptable... I do all my own engineering, all my own re-engineering” Creel fisherman, Barra, the Outer Hebrides

The catching sector is highly dependent on the ability to be flexible and adaptable in terms of operational strategies. Such flexibility is needed for efficient operations but is also embedded deeply into the personal identity of those who work in the sector, and the importance they attach to operational independence and freedoms, displaying resourcefulness as part of the ‘art’ of successful fishing. A fisherman has to put his hand to numerous highly specialised skills in his job, ranging from sea navigation and the ability to read the weather and the tides to boat handling and repair skills. A job as a fisherman involves business skills, extreme survival skills to cope with sleep deprivation and hours out at sea, and the ability to process fish. An ex-fisherman in Shetland described how a fisherman gets used to putting his hand to anything and everything when out at sea, and keeps busy all the time. As a result it transpired

that an 18-day job guarding over an oil pipe was considered “boring” by many fisherman. So people in the sector depend on the ability to develop a breadth of specialised skills. This is discussed in more depth in the following chapter on shared communities of the mind.

In Fraserburgh, the perception from local people was that reductions in white fish quota have resulted in most of the trawler boats now fishing predominantly for prawns, whilst in the pelagic sector respondents explained that new stocks, such as sprats, are now being fished to replace the reductions in other pelagic species quotas:

“At the moment they’re fishing for sprats... They also fish for sand eels... They’ve had to diversify because the quotas have been cut so far down” Pelagic fisherman’s wife, Fraserburgh

As well as having to respond to fisheries policy rules and regulations, fishermen reported that they also have to work within environmental limitations and uncertainties, and respond to the patterns and availability of the fish stocks and changes in weather:

“Because of your size, you’re limited... I’ve been off the six mile... I could go further than that if the weather was going to let me but you can’t depend on the weather. You need to go where you can make a living... As far as the scallops goes... it’s all close in around the shore... the prawn bottom that we have, as I say its 40 mile east of here, or right in. So, it’s in or out if you know what I mean” Inshore fisherman, Shetland

Respondents described how making the most of the opportunities available was fundamental to working in the fishing industry. Responding to opportunity meant switching gear and targeting diverse fisheries, fishing grounds and fishing methods:

“We did kind of crabbing, lobsters... additional to that we would work nets for crayfish... We had another fishery... spurdog, the dog fish... sometimes in the winter we would turn to scalloping, you know, it was kind of multipurpose boats... Rather than sticking to one fishery and moving areas... you just had to change fisheries as the seasons came and went or to suit the weather” Creel fisherman, the Outer Hebrides

It was amongst inshore fishing boats in the Outer Hebrides particularly that fishermen emphasised the role that adaptive response played in the catching sector:

“[Why did you convert to scallop dredging?].... The lobsters had gone down, they weren’t very plentiful... The dogfish stocks had gone down considerably... And we saw an opportunity in scallop dredging because we were seeing other people coming in here to do it. So decided to do

that... It was opportunity... you just went for opportunity. That was how the fishermen worked” Ex-fisherman, Uist, the Outer Hebrides

So there are clear findings to suggest that flexible response and commitment to being available around the clock to do the job are practical requirements for successfully catching, processing and selling fish commercially. Such characteristics were demonstrated by all of the respondents who participated in this research who worked in the fishing industry.

People working in other onshore businesses also reported needing a high level of flexibility to operate, and a willingness to respond to opportunity. Since many dealt with fishing boats as part of their clientele, spontaneity also featured heavily in their daily routines and work patterns:

“You just have to take your opportunities when they arise and be willing to work... that’s company policy, is be willing to work night or day, 24 hours, it does nae matter, ken.... If a boat comes in to land we’ll be the guys that does the manual labour... we’re not just here in an office chair all day, ken you’re out at the coal face doing what the company does” Haulage operator, Shetland

### ***3.2.3 Indivisibility between fishing and the wider community***

People and businesses not related directly to fishing appeared to be heavily affected by the all-hours rhythms of the industry, demonstrating a wider community connection to and dependency on fishing. For example, in Fraserburgh a high street launderette can put a 3-day wait on clothes washing when bad weather in the middle of a week brings the fishing boats into the harbour early with a cargo of 50 bags of Filipino fishermen’s washing. Getting the washing done before the weekend for the fishermen to get back out to sea means other customers’ clothes have to wait. In the Outer Hebrides a factory manager explained how his business was, and had been, struggling for several weeks leading up to the time of the research, as a direct result of bad weather at that time preventing the local fishermen from going out to catch fish. He suggested that not only his business, but also the wider community in Barra, was heavily dependent on, and affected by, the changing prospects of the local catching sector:

“The factory here is tight for work just now because of the weather... Don’t have any landings. It has a knock-on effect for the whole of the... island’s economy because this is the biggest private firm on the island so if the fishermen aren’t working, the 30 odd staff in Barra working here aren’t working, there’s no money to go round” Factory manager, the Outer Hebrides

There were community narratives to suggest that the majority of local employment was found outside of the fishing now (see Chapter 5). However, whilst this may be the case, there is evidence to suggest that there remains a sense within the communities that fishing implicitly lies at the heart of their social and, in some cases, economic, fabric. The activities of the local catching sector are regarded as the starting point for any subsequent social or economic chain reaction within the wider territorial community. In Shetland also, where the local population enjoy a multitude of social and employment opportunities outside of fishing, the fishing industry nevertheless has wider importance. Fishing would appear to remain a defining feature of the people and the place in particular areas:

“The majority of people would have been affected in one way or another with the fishing industry... If you weren’t directly employed then your income indirectly came from the fishing... My father-in-law had a shop up in Lerwick and he always said that he always knew when it had been a good fishing year and when it had been bad because his earnings went up and down accordingly” Local resident, Shetland

Two respondents in Fraserburgh, who were from fishing families but did not work in the industry themselves, felt that all the factories and shops in Fraserburgh were linked to the industry in one way or another. Other respondents, who worked in fishing but had friends or relatives who did not, perceived non-fishing businesses in Fraserburgh to be suffering as a result of the contraction of the fishing industry:

“[Is your wife involved in the industry?] No. No. She’s got a shop up town... it’s on a downhill slope as well. Simply because people aren’t spending the money... The majority of this corner is fishing and there’s not the same money in fishing that there has been in the past. So obviously they don’t have the same income to spend” Harbour electrician, Fraserburgh

“When I first started in this industry there was... heaps of guys going to sea. So if... a few... weren’t getting on because of poor fishing, you’d always... more boats that was being successful... There was a lot more money being generated through the industry that way, and that was being fed back into the town. People could afford to buy a new house, could afford to buy a new car, could afford to eat out at the weekends... but as the industry’s shrunk, so the money’s shrunk” Ship Chandler, Fraserburgh

A contracting catching sector would appear to be having major consequences for onshore businesses in the case study areas. In the decade leading up to 2010 there was a loss of 66 vessels over 10 metres in length in Fraserburgh accounting for more than a third of its fleet.

Whilst it is unclear how many of these are due to decommissioning, for every boat lost to the local fleet the onshore businesses lose a customer. Following what was locally perceived as heavy decommissioning in Fraserburgh in 2010, several tradesmen explained that for the first time they have had to refuse new apprentices from the local school as their businesses do not have the capital to support it.

### ***3.2.4 The mirroring of uncertainty within fishing households***

As has been shown in section 3.2.3, the important features of flexibility and adaptive response in the lives of those who work in the fishing industry inform and shape personal, cultural and societal bonds in the wider community. Spontaneity and flexibility are common characteristics of workers' home lives as well. Allowing work to spill over into home life is inherent in the lives and identities of fishing families. For example, the wife of a pelagic fisherman in one of the case study areas explained how she often left her bed in the middle of the night to pick up her husband as he came in off the boat. She said she did this not only because she was keen to see him safe on shore again, but also because it will often have been a number of weeks since she saw him last:

“You're life revolves around your husband... dad'll be home and... it's fantastic... I was always down sitting at the pier waiting for him to come in... And the kids have always done it... they've always sat there desperate for dad to come home... whatever time of night, I would have taken them out of their beds, down to the harbour, sit and wait for him to come in, and the same with when he went away” Fisherman's wife, Fraserburgh

It was apparent that most of the respondents who worked in the industry had married or partnered up with people who had an understanding of fishing and its way of life, whether it was because their brother was a fisherman, or their father or uncle or mother was involved, or that they had grown up in a place surrounded by neighbours who had worked in the industry:

“[Your wife was in a different community?] Oh she was in [name of different coastal town].... Her dad... he was not involved in fishing. He worked in a factory... But yet her mother, she came from [name of fishing village]. She was fishing... her father and two of her brothers, they were lost at sea. So when I appeared dating their daughter and they realised I was fishing there was one black mark” Fisherman, Fraserburgh

“When Joan [from a fishing village on the Scottish mainland] moved up here and we married... we found that my folks from [name of coastal village in Shetland] had actually known Joan's

folks who were involved in fishing, and they'd fished together in [name of a coastal town in England] in the 50s and 60s" Ex-fisherman, Shetland

So the adaptability and uncertainties in the day-to-day work organisation of the sector also demands adaptation and flexibility in the households of those involved in the industry. Fishing industry businesses and their households, by their nature, require flexibility and a willingness to respond to opportunities. It was clear that a commitment from the wider family was needed for one to work in the fishing industry. So not only those who worked directly in the industry, but also those who shared households with those who worked in the sector spoke of their home lives revolving around the fishing, with uncertainty and spontaneity being key characteristics of daily life at home. A fisherman's partner explained that she did not socialise much as a result of not being able to predict when her partner would be at home:

"I don't socialize if I'm honest...cos Bob works the way he does and he's only home kinda, like, really less than 24 hours...the least he'll phone me is an hour from the harbour"

Fisherman's partner, Fraserburgh

Other fishing household members described constantly being "switched on" to news from the fishing:

"My grandfather always switched on... before the days of the mobile phone and things, then they had... a boat channel on the radio and they tuned in to hear the boats talking home, and each boat had its own number... I can always remember him "shush shush! Be quiet!" and they spoke at certain times of the day. And they had certain things that they would say... my uncles... when they came home from the fishing... there was always talk of the fishing. The Fishing News was bought and... although dad wasn't in the fishing he was certainly well aware" Fisherman's wife, Shetland

"There'll never be a day that goes by that we heard any word from Scott, that's our nephew... he phones my husband most days... My husband was on the phone this morning from Norway... "How's things, going? Did you remember to do such and such? Have you heard any word from Scott?" Third thing was "have you heard from Scott?" so I mean he follows it very carefully" Fisherman's wife, Shetland

Respondents spoke about how a family member's involvement in fishing shaped their lives at home and led to a resourceful and flexible way of life, where coping with uncertainty and difficult times on a regular basis results in adopting a flexible, "take it as it comes", outlook:

“You think, well what am I doing this week?... where’s John? Oh there’s a letter that comes in... there’s something broken, oh we’ll have to get fixing this... there’s a flat tyre on the car, well John’s not here so you have to deal with it” Fisherman’s wife, Shetland

So the household relations of people working in the fishing industry mirror a commitment to fishing, as well as patterns of uncertainty, adaptability and spontaneity inherent in the catching sector.

### ***3.2.5 Emotional forces that bring people together***

Routine worry and uncertainty around the clock would appear to be key features of daily life for fishermen’s wives and families, as well as for the fishermen themselves. As well as coping with uncertainty through flexible response and resourcefulness, the danger involved in working in the fishing industry also contributes to a sense of strong household commitment to fishing, and underpins shared notions of the ‘fishing community’. A comparison might be made with those working in the military where there is real physical danger involved in the job (Woodward and Jenkins, 2011) and also to mining households that have been linked by living on a daily basis with risk and danger (Bennett, 2009). People working in the fishing industry go to work with an understanding that they are risking their lives and that there is a real possibility of serious injury or death. When fishermen go to work they can literally be saving one another’s lives:

“I can’t remember the order of events but... my son’s gear had anchored the boat... the hydraulics had gone... two life rafts... they both got torn away with the weather... Bill... started to steam as hard as he could... the helicopter... couldn’t take them off... It was snowing... Bill got to the site and what they had to do was pass a rope across to them attached to a life raft... they made the rope fast to the [name of son’s boat], then they climbed down in to it... cut the rope, floated off and then the helicopter picked them up out of the life raft... He went back to the fishing but... I think he couldn’t stand it... he had nightmares and suffered mentally from it and he’s in the merchant navy now... I don’t think he will ever get over it completely” Fisherman’s wife

It would seem that the stresses and strains of living and working under a routine of danger and uncertainty serve to bring about acute emotional bonds between people involved in the fishing industry and among fishing households. Worry was a persistent feature of fishing households:

“I’ve always put it to the back of my mind that he’s at sea and it’s dangerous, but now that my son’s aboard, I’ve a different awareness because he’s actually on deck... If you’re watching these programmes on television and you see water and you think “oh my god” and they’re saying “no its okay, that’s nay too bad a day” and sort of, waves... crashing on to the decks, it’s a very dangerous job... But they seem to enjoy it. They seem to love the life. It’s a thrill or something” Fisherman’s wife, Fraserburgh

As well as dealing with the threat of physical danger to the person, respondents also described having to deal with long spells of absence from the person. A fisherman’s wife in Shetland described the intense emotions of loss that she and her children endured on a regular basis as a result of her husband working out at sea:

“When the bairns [children] were peerie [small] I think that was the hardest... they were grieving cos their dad was going off. He usually goes away in the middle of the night... they were one or two and they did no understand what was happening and then you count down sleeps til dad came home” Fisherman’s wife, Shetland

It is clear that acute emotional bonds build up between people involved in the fishing through shared daily uncertainty and worry. In terms of how these emotional bonds contribute to senses of the fishing ‘community’, it would seem that in one sense, these emotional bonds unite people around the coastline through empathising for a particular way of life. This is discussed in the following chapter on shared communities of the mind. In another sense, the emotional bonds strengthen a sense of the fishing community within places. Several interviewees from fishing households across the three case study areas described how people living in fishing households stay close to people from other fishing households in the surrounding area for support. One woman in Fraserburgh described how when the men are away at sea, the women will often meet up for company and support:

“It’s very good here. The women all tend to stick together. They’re company for one another. If the men are away... you have a support group. You have people you can phone... you know, oh her husband’s away, I’ll give her a shout... “Are you coming round this evening? You come round and have your coffee” or on a Friday night... many times, “is your husband away? Well come round, have a glass of wine”... these are men who are, they’re working away from home” Fisherman’s wife, Fraserburgh

This fisherman’s wife explained that most of the people she interacted with had worked at sea in some form or another:



“They all started at sea. Some of them, their husbands are on the rigs now. But they started out at sea, 20 odd years ago... I’ve a particular friend... her husband... took decommissioning and he’s on a survey boat... so he’s still away from home. So we still are involved with a glass of wine Friday night (laughter) “Is Peter away? Do you want to come round?”... It doesn’t change the social connections” Fisherman’s wife, Fraserburgh

These data would suggest that the culture of having men ‘away’ brings households together. Again a comparison can be made here with the military community (Woodward and Jenkins, 2011) and mining households (Bennett, 2009).

In summary, the uncertainty that surrounds a life involved in the fishing industry includes round the clock working and spontaneity, and the subsequent requirements of flexibility and willingness to respond to opportunity, both at work and at home, that such working conditions demand. These findings, together with insights into how fishing shapes the experience of households who are involved with it, highlights the substantial level of devotion and commitment to fishing that people in Scotland show to it. The evidence suggests that the emotional bonds developed through working in the fishing industry are vital for reinforcing social networks upon which the industry depends for its renewal. Furthermore, a sense of indivisibility between the fishing industry and businesses in the wider community demonstrates an interdependence that would also appear to bring about a particular kind of closeness, trust and dependability between people. This is explored in the next section.

### **3.3 Closeness, trust and networks that support industry renewal**

The data suggest that there is a particular working culture in the fishing industry in Scotland that is dependent on strong interpersonal relationships and reciprocity. Interpersonal relationships are crucial to successful working and can often make a difference to the survival of a business, whether onshore or at sea. Businesses include vessels in the catching sector but also onshore specialist businesses that service the vessels, including harbour trades, fish factories and local shops selling food and general supplies for the boats.

#### ***3.3.1 Trust within business relationships***

Business transactions, such as the selling of fish, or giving financial assistance to a business that is in need of help, are acted upon through a ‘belief’ in others that stems from positive and trusted relationships. For example, a fish agent explained how his entire working life had

been spent building up relationships with skippers. He had started in the industry straight out of high school, spent his first few years auctioneering fish and was now doing the accounts for vessels in the harbour. He said that organising the finances of fishing vessels depended on the establishment of good relationships with the owners of the vessels and that these relationships could be based on years, often spanning generations, of knowing one another:

“Oot [out] of that thirty five boats, we’ve maybe got fifteen, twenty boats that are maybe struggling... There’s guys that we think well he’s a good guy, he’s had a rough spell but he’ll pull it back so we’ll help him just now and then he’ll repay us. And so it’s a bit of relationship between the agent and each skipper... Most of our boats have been with us a long time, and go back even before I came, 30, 40 years they’ve been, they’ve seen like the father and son coming through” Fish Agent, Fraserburgh

As a result of such close relationships and connections in the fishing industry, it would seem that there is often a deep sense of loyalty and obligation towards one another. A fish buyer in one of the case study areas suggested that if a boat’s agent is based in one port, the boat is strongly encouraged to land in that port “despite any price difference between the two ports”:

“The loyalty and link thing... is very strong... If a Shetland boat decides to go to Peterhead because he’s not happy with the price in Shetland... it doesnae go down particularly well... they could get punished” Fish buyer

Loyalty and trust were frequently cited as key features within the relationships between people involved in the fishing industry. The fish buyer suggested that trust was a core characteristic within the sector and important between people working in fishing because of the inherent inability to control or exact anything:

“There’s people that you’re buying for... they can’t see the fish, there’s no way they can tell the quality. It’s only by repeated transactions that you build up... this mutual sort of respect... a licence to do things on their behalf” Fish buyer

Crucial to his argument was the idea that the industry depended on trust. He said “You couldn’t stick anyone off the street in there... it would probably take a good number of years to build up a bunch of customers and get trust”. In other words, building trust, as opposed to any sort of other skill, is a fundamental requirement and a foundation upon which the industry not only operates but is sustained and renewed. Respondents in the Outer Hebrides described this also:

“We like to have very regular, steady customers because then we can build up a trust and just a really good working relationship whereby I know they’re not cheating us and they know we’re not trying to pull a fast one on them” Fisheries manager, the Outer Hebrides

Trust would appear to be inherent between people in the industry regardless of whether or not they know one another. For example, a retired fisherman in Harris described how he had been able to buy a boat from a fisherman down in the south of England on the basis of a ‘guarantee’:

“I said to him “well my problem is it’s not easy for me to go down and see it”... he said “I’ll tell you what I’ll do for you. I’ll send you photos of her and I’ll guarantee you she’s as good as the photos and I won’t sell her to anybody til you see the photos”.... The boat was fantastic and I phoned him back and I said “yes”... We took a lorry down... put the boat on the back of the lorry and drove to Uig in Skye, and has been in Harris since then” Retired fisherman, Harris, the Outer Hebrides

To illustrate this level of trust within the industry further, within the industry now, business networks are not just made up of local or UK-based connections. They extend through distant networks also:

“90% of their boats fish for velvet crab so they had to find a strong Spanish contact that they could deal with. They don’t sell into France, they don’t really do that much prawn. They just concentrate on velvet crab and their links with Spain. And it’s been very successful. They’ve made a good link with a good honest customer who probably trust them and they trust him and they just buy and sell between each other, week in, week out” Fisheries cooperative manager, the Outer Hebrides

Relationships between the Outer Hebrides and French and Spanish buyers have been growing since the collapse of the herring industry in the late 1970s, when local fishermen had to diversify into crab and other shellfish. The bulk of static gear boats in the Outer Hebrides deal with Spanish buyers. A fish buyer in Barra explained that all the fish he bought off the local trawler fleet was sold to Spanish buyers and that his business even had its own refrigerated lorries to truck the produce from the islands over to the mainland and the European continent. The fishing cooperatives in Uist also sell their live fish directly to Spanish buyers to try and cut out the middlemen, and in doing so are able to build up a high level of trust with them.

### ***3.3.2 Importance of social and family networks***

Perhaps as a result of the defining qualities of closeness, trust and loyalty, people in the fishing industry often described themselves as being in a ‘chain’, or tied into and reliant on social networks. For example, the crewing of boats usually happens informally through word-of-mouth:

“You look for crew, you just hear a name and then you phone that guy and if he’s not looking for something he might know someone that is and, so you just, everything just goes down the chain like” Prawn skipper, Fraserburgh

A reliance on social networks for finding crew for a boat highlights an informality inherent in, and crucial to, the workings of fishing businesses and the fishing community. Moreover, family connections remain vitally important for sustaining and renewing the fishing industry. A fisherman in the Outer Hebrides explained that when he had started fishing in Barra “there was only five boats and four of them were father and son teams”. Another fisherman in Uist explained that he had also “started off” with his father, before buying a boat of his own with his brother. Renewal of the industry in the Outer Hebrides frequently involves boats being passed down from father to son:

“I started fishing when I was 16 with my father. He had a boat, similar size to what I’ve got at the moment... a wooden one... When he retired I took over the boat. I invested in a newer boat and have been fishing that since” Creel fisherman, Uist, The Outer Hebrides

Fishermen in Shetland and Fraserburgh also described how it was common for fishermen to enter the industry on their father’s boat:

“I went on board the boat with my dad... as a skivvy..... the skipper’s son is always the worst job to get. Because when something goes wrong... instead of shouting at the rest of the guys and them upset, you’d have got the.... [Did you think you were eventually going to be skipper?] Oh definitely. That was my focus. Once I knew that I was going to the fishing... I knew that it would take two or three years to learn the job... but that was something that I was focused on” Prawn skipper, Fraserburgh

Many fishermen described being introduced to fishing by family members. An ex-fisherman in Stornoway who had begun his career in the merchant navy explained that he ended up a fisherman as a result of going out on fishing trips with his father and uncle during his weeks off:

“Whenever I came ashore on leave I would very often go out on the fishing boat... with my father and uncle and if somebody wanted a week off I would go out in their place... I came ashore in... ’79, got asked out for a week and stayed seven years... I was only working four, five days, home every weekend, young child, ideal for me. And that was my career” Ex-fisherman, Stornoway, the Outer Hebrides

Two fishing brothers in another part of the Outer Hebrides introduced me to their cousins who were born on the mainland but now worked as fishermen on the islands. The cousins had moved to the Outer Hebrides to work as crew on their boat and now had a boat of their own, employing one other from Stornoway. Extended family connections appeared to be instrumental in helping people into the fishing industry in Shetland also:

“I went away on a pelagic boat... with a guy... that comes to be a relation of my father’s. He realised I had this urge to go so he took me off for a run. And then my auntie married my uncle who was on the [name of boat]... and he... went into partnership on a fishing boat called the [name of boat]... they couldn’t get crew and I said I would go” Scallop fisherman, Shetland

The evidence suggests that family connections keep onshore businesses going too. Recruitment to jobs in the onshore sector often happens informally and through community networks. One woman in Shetland described how her brother had got an apprenticeship as a marine engineer in Lerwick because her father had “organised that with somebody [he] had grown up with”. A ship chandler in north Shetland explained that his business had been passed down from father to son, whilst a scallop factory manager in Fraserburgh had acquired his position by taking over from his father. Many entered the sector out of a strong sense of loyalty to maintaining the family business:

“My father and one of my friends started the business about ten years ago. And one of the partners became ill. And basically he was facing a year off work and we were so busy at the time... that they asked me if I would come in. So I had to make a difficult decision... I never really planned to work in the family business but, what can you do?.. There’s an onus and a duty to keep it going. Not that I resent it... I kind of like the job” Fish buyer

A consequence of finding a way into the industry through family networks is that an important part of training for the job is often carried out informally. Many fishermen revealed that they had depended on tapping into knowledge from others in the community and learning from people’s experiences from the past in order to learn their job. In North Uist a young creel fisherman explained how courses were not able to teach about ropes and sorting tangles,

or trying to free a stuck creel with the sea swelling. He explained that if the water comes you have to cut the rope, and that that is something that cannot be taught in a classroom.

It is evident that while close and familial networks are clearly a feature of the fishing industry, the dynamics of the social networks that exist within the fishing industry have also changed considerably over time, highlighting the fluid nature of the fishing ‘community’ in Scotland. Many respondents explained how social relationships also transcend across different fishing communities through distant supply chains and business linkages. Fishermen spoke of business relationships and friendships with people from fishing communities in many other parts of the UK and beyond. A fisherman in Barra explained that he had worked in Cornwall as a fisherman for a few months and still kept in touch with people down there. And there were people working in the industry in Fraserburgh who had come from Cambeltown, Lossiemouth, and many of the smaller fishing villages around the Scottish coastline, revealing alliances between people in the fishing industry that extend beyond family and place to wider social networks.

The importance too of non-nationals in the local fishing industry also serves to display the dynamism of the networks that currently exist. There was evidence to suggest that many of the workers in the Scottish fishing industry were foreign nationals or descended from foreign nationals. For example, a net-maker in one of the case study areas explained that whilst he and his mother had been born in the local area, his father had been a Polish migrant who had moved into the area to work as a mechanic on the fishing boats. Many of the fishermen in the case study areas are also foreign nationals, as are many of the people who live in the wider communities. The employment of non-nationals is discussed further in Chapter 5 (see section 5.3.1).

In summary, the findings suggest that people living and working in the fishing industry in the case study areas belong to close and familial networks that are both place-based but also extend further afield. Fishing industry-orientated relationships tend to be based on trust and loyalty and tie together fishing interests around the coastline of Scotland but also far beyond. The closeness and trust inherent in the interpersonal relationships in the fishing industry remain crucial for maintaining and renewing the industry. What remains of the industry in Scotland may well be highly industrial and capitalised in some places, but even here the sector is still dependent on close interpersonal relationships, shared values, and family and business networks. These social networks, together with what can be described as

‘socialization’ into the fishing industry, are what the fishing industry depends on for renewal. Socialization into the fishing industry is discussed in the next section.

### **3.4 Intergenerational practices and socialisation**

Shared intergenerational practices that expose people to the sea and boats from a young age have played a fundamental role in socialising people into the fishing industry in the three case study areas.

#### ***3.4.1 Spending time on boats***

In Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland, being born by the sea and spending time on the sea in boats, or being involved with the fishing industry from a young age, would appear to be the norm for many people, regardless of whether or not they work in the fishing industry. A priest in the Outer Hebrides, for example, described how he grew up in a community where “the men all went to sea and travelled the world”, and the women “followed the herring round the coasts... gutting the herring”. His family had operated a fishing boat when he was a child, and he had been surrounded by other families who had operated boats:

“The [name of coastal waters]... in my young days would be full of boats... and it was more or less a family operation. You fished for flounders or skate or flatfish... each small line had 500 hooks and you baited the hooks with lugworm which you dug up off the beach... You had to clean them, and then you had to bait them and bait them in such a way that they rolled out perfectly into the sea... all the family helped” Local priest, the Outer Hebrides

Fishing was formative to his upbringing, an activity that brought people in the community together through a sense of camaraderie:

“As kids we fished off the rocks... you’d go after school, it was getting dark. You stayed until you caught fish. You took it home cos that was your supper. And sometimes a communal activity, lots of people gathered together and if there was a lot of fish around they fished at the same time and had great fun” Local priest, the Outer Hebrides

Many interviewees put forward the view that fishing played a formative role in their upbringing. A respondent in Shetland said that spending time in boats as a child was what people in Whalsay did “to amuse” themselves:

“A great past time was going down... to the beach with the small rowing boats... we used to go off rowing and catching fish and never, never had a second thought. We’d just go away with the boys that were hoping to one day go to the fishing. But we never thought of it as being anything else but it was just what we did to amuse ourselves (laughter)” Local resident, Shetland

Many respondents expressed intense enthusiasm for fishing as children:

“You were lucky if your granddad had a wee boat that you could row in... when I was in primary school I used to get up in the morning, go and haul my creels in Voe, and row back again and home and get up to school” Local resident, Shetland

The majority of the fishermen who participated in the research - whether they worked in the pelagic industry, the demersal sector, or as inshore fishermen - described spending time on boats as children:

“I always had a small boat when I was younger and just went off and shot creels... I don’t know what it was. I think maybe just surrounded by the sea, just always inquisitive I suppose” Scallop fisherman, Shetland

In Fraserburgh too people in the town and its surrounding coastal villages described growing up using boats and with friends who did the same, bringing about a sense of camaraderie and amusement:

“We had like a... 15 foot boat that my dad bought that we used to go out and work the lobster pots.... me and my brother. Most of my friends were the same, they would have had boats as well... it was just the way you did it. In the summer months, every night you got your tea and away down to the harbour and away in the boat. And we filled the boats with girls and took them across the crivy... it was just what you did” Prawn fisherman (from fishing village outside of Fraserburgh), Fraserburgh

And it was common for fishermen to enter the industry just as soon as they were old enough to do so, such that there was no gap in a person’s life between fishing for pleasure and fishing for business:

“We always went to the fishing every night... for crabs and lobsters and that kind of stuff... usually after tea... When I left school... I think I was home for about five days then went straight, straight to the fishing, prawn trawler” Ex-fisherman, north Shetland



As a result, the informality and camaraderie generated through early experiences of fishing appears to carry on into adulthood. People take it with them into the fishing industry:

“It was a great life at the herring... there was about 12 boats from here; there was 40 out of Stornoway... and everybody... just, helped each other... On a Monday morning we would start at this end, the Stornoway fleet would work at the north end. When everybody would haul they would shout to each other “what’s doing?” and everybody gave information, and they used to wind each other up” Retired fisherman, Harris, the Outer Hebrides

However there is also evidence of a wider dependence on the sea and boats in the collective identities of the three case study areas, such that the sea and fishing are an important fibre that makes up the coastal ‘community’. An interviewee in North Uist explained how everything being done by boats when he was growing up acted in tying people together between different places:

“There were no roads... when I was a kid... there were no cars, everything was done by boat... People from [Benbecula] would come down to Grimsay to shop in their boats... there were shops in Benbecula as well but it was easy if you were in an outlying district of Benbecula to come by boat, that was your transport.” Local resident, North Uist, the Outer Hebrides

In Shetland too respondents conveyed a wider territorial sense of dependence and attachment to boats and the sea, regardless of whether or not they worked in the fishing industry. One respondent on the island of Whalsay, when asked if he travelled to the mainland of Shetland much when he was younger, explained that “it wasn’t that easy – you had to go with the boat. There were no ferries”. The sea was important for people and for their identity with one respondent describing how the sea “was in your blood”:

“You see that building there... that’s where I went to primary school. There was about 30 children at the school. I mean if you take a closer look at it, what a place to have your education. And I mean the sea shore was our playground... Really amazing. So the sea was in your blood” Local resident, Burra, Shetland

### ***3.4.2 Local language and dialect***

The importance of the sea in informing peoples’ sense of self and collective identity is reflected in the use of language in the case study areas. And use of a local language or dialect would appear to be significant in Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland for linking people to each other locally but also to fishing. In Fraserburgh, for example, one respondent

described how using Doric, the regional rural dialect of Scots spoken in the north east of Scotland, tied him to the local area:

“Everybody I would come in contact here I would speak Doric unless people like yourself that I thought might not understand... If I’m phoning a supplier in England, if I was speaking Doric to them, they wouldn’t have a clue like [what makes you decide... to choose not to speak Doric to someone?] Erm probably the location... where they come from” Harbour tradesman, Fraserburgh

Whilst this respondent stressed that Doric was “definitely not fishing related”, he described how as well as using Doric with people in his local area, he would also use it with people from Mallaig and Shetland - traditional fishing areas – suggesting a linguistic bond with people from ‘fishing’ places. He went on to suggest that people outside of Fraserburgh, in ‘inland’ or ‘rural’ areas were “trying to lose their Doric accent”, suggesting that, for him, the Doric language helped him identify with the coast. A respondent in Shetland felt that Doric linked in to the local dialect in Shetland, and was a way of speaking that united people from fishing backgrounds:

“[Would Shetland people understand Doric?] Yeah... there’s lots of words that [my wife from the north east mainland] would use that are the same in Shetland... But then there’s a whole layer of Shetland dialect words that [my wife] and people in Scotland wouldn’t be familiar with, because they’re Norwegian” Ex-fisherman, Shetland

However whilst language was spoken about as tying people together who had fishing backgrounds, and something that respondents used to identify themselves as similar to others who worked in the fishing industry, there was also evidence to suggest that language was used by people to differentiate themselves from each other. A harbour tradesman in Fraserburgh from an ‘inland’ area pointed to significant differences in the dialect between the different fishing villages around the North East coastline:

“In the countryside everybody speaks Doric. But... up the coast, right up to, maybe Buckie, right down to Peterhead, the difference in languages in every villages down that coast is, aye it’s a big difference... Fraserburgh and Inverallochy didnae speak the same language. I mean if we have guys in from Inverallochy, skippers, some of the words, I have to say “what does that mean?”” Harbour tradesman, Fraserburgh

An interviewee from Inverallochy, one of the coastal villages outside of Fraserburgh, also explained that people in the villages used different dialects. The local dialect according to this respondent was ‘Buchan’ and was described as a “language of the sea”:

“I don’t speak Doric, I speak Buchan... it’s what I call a ‘language of the sea’, because fishers travelled so much... around the North Sea... If you look at... the Netherlands, at Norway, at Sweden, a lot of the dialect here, the words are exactly the same... [So what’s Doric?] It’s more inland. It’s more, like... we would call a farming dialect... [Buchan dialect is] very much a fisher dialect... from my point of view anyway” Local resident (from Inverallochy), Fraserburgh

These perceived differences in dialect between the ‘inland’ and Fraserburgh, between Fraserburgh and its surrounding coastal villages, and between the different coastal villages themselves illustrates the way people in the north east differentiate themselves even from their closest neighbours. Regardless of all being from the north east region, people still feel differences to one another.

In the Outer Hebrides, a respondent who had moved to the islands from the Scottish mainland said he felt “different” for not speaking the local language, and suggested that from an outside perspective the local dialect served to bond many of the local islanders together:

“[So as someone that wasn’t born here you don’t feel any difference?] Oh aye you do feel different... if you have a Gaelic background... there’s just a history that goes back which seems to be... a lot tighter... That’s an advantage cos obviously people go into Gaelic conversation periodically and you’re not quite sure what it’s about” Local resident, Stornoway, the Outer Hebrides

However in all three case study areas, local people, particularly those involved in the fishing industry, spoke about the local language or dialect becoming ‘diluted’ or being lost:

“I will speak to [my daughter] in Gaelic up to school age and then it will change to English. She picks up English from TV. And her friends outside also speak English. It’s become a bit diluted out here, the Gaelic language” Creel skipper, the Outer Hebrides

In Shetland a fisherman’s wife said that despite speaking broad Shetland she noticed that she was using it less and less:

“I’ll find myself saying... “noo it happened last night”. I used to say “the strean”. The “strean” is the Shetland word for “last night” and although I use it from time to time I’m lohsing [loosing] it. It’s going” Fisherman’s wife, Shetland

It was suggested in Shetland that the local dialect was being lost as a result of increasing numbers of people from outside the area moving in:

“There’s a much more diverse group of people living in Shetland now than there used to be. When I grew up everybody came from Shetland, if not Burra... The greatest difference has been the use of dialect. Shetland dialect has been very seriously diluted because if you have a few people coming into the community that doesn’t speak dialect then dialect speakers immediately revert to English” Local resident, Shetland

So whilst language or dialect appeared to be something that people shared who worked in the fishing industry, it was spoken about as being in decline. In the Outer Hebrides respondents referred to a gradual loss of the Gaelic language through an aging population and young people increasingly choosing not to speak Gaelic. In this way, the significance of the loss of the local language appears to resonate with wider intergenerational change as well as shifting place-based identities. An ex-fisherman in Lewis conveyed a sense of generational nostalgia linked to the loss of the local language:

“I will talk to my neighbour in Gaelic... I’ll talk to my son-in-law in Gaelic... Now his sons, my grandchildren, won’t speak Gaelic. And so it goes on... at secondary level they all end up in the same school... speaking English... It’s not that they lose it but they don’t use it anymore. I think my generation... those of us in our 50s now, are probably the last of the fluent Gaelic speakers.” Ex-fisherman, the Outer Hebrides

Language use would appear to be important then for people to retain a sense of themselves, who they are, where they are from and what they identify with. But what it reveals about the fishing ‘community’ is that there are multiple and changing identities; just as readily as language similarities can be identified between people, so too can differences.

### ***3.4.3 Socialisation of the wider community***

People identified their households as “fishing households” where they had experienced a particular way of life growing up linked to the fishing industry. This way of life included a social life that revolved around the time the fishing boats would be in the harbour:

“[did you feel your house was a fishing house?] Yeah, yeah I think so... it’s always been... close around us... when we were growing up, the boys wanted to go off to the fishing and the social life... During the week Whalsay was quite quiet and the pier was empty. But the boats came home at the weekend and there was a bit of a life that came, you know with them, coming back” Fisherman’s wife, Whalsay, Shetland

Another feature of belonging to a community of fishing households was being at school with the majority of people having the ambition to work in the fishing industry:

“[when you were growing up in Hamnavoe would you have described your household as a fishing household?] Absolutely, yep... apart from the teacher, the nurse... one or two people with building businesses, everybody went fishing in Burra... It’s all I ever wanted to do... you either stayed at the secondary school in Burra or you moved to Lerwick to the Anderson High School which I did and... then ended up going to University. But... I was just putting off the time that I was going to be a fisherman” Retired fisherman, Shetland

There were people in the case study areas who did not end up working in the fishing industry but who had been exposed to the rhythms of the fishing industry as children. They could demonstrate either an intimate knowledge of the industry or had numerous links to the industry now. Many knew about the industry simply because they had fishing roots:

“My grandfathers were involved in the fishing industry and their parents, but no member of the family since then has been... They were small fishermen in the whitefish industry... as the majority of Shetlanders were... None of them was from Lerwick. They was from rural districts” Lerwegian, Shetland

Others described there being an inescapable influence of the fishing industry on the wider territorial community:

“There was people in our road... they worked at the gut factory and they only had work when there was work to have. So when the place was stinking of fish guts... then there was work. And that was when I was very young” Marine engineer, Shetland

Still others demonstrated extensive links. A man who had spent his life working for the port authority in one of the case study areas explained that his grandfather had “owned fishing boats and... kippering sheds”. He himself was a dedicated lifeboat volunteer, and his son was a fisherman. In another of the case study areas a local engineer, who had no involvement in the fishing industry, explained that he had still grown up in a fishing household:

“[the house you grew up in was a fishing household?] Oh yes... my grandfather was a skipper, he had his own boat... they used the loft area. The herring nets were stored there all winter cos they did the herring fishing in the summer and they went to the seine net... whitefish in the winter season. So before the herring season started they had to check all the nets and mend any tears, so the whole family were involved” Local engineer

This respondent described how even after moving out of his grandfather’s house, because his father had worked in the fish market, his home life had continued to be exposed to the rhythms of the fishing industry:

“Often days were very early because skippers would want to land at their own times so they had to go down maybe 5, 6 o clock in the morning to land a boat and the skipper would say... as a thank you, “just help yourself to some of the catch”. So we always had a ready supply of the best fish” Local engineer

One respondent who did not work in the fishing industry spoke of owning a small fishing boat and using it to go lobster fishing at the weekends. He explained that it was because he had been exposed to the sea and the fishing industry from a young age in his community:

“I spent... a vast amount of my time around the pier... we used to do things like... packing kippers, packing small scallops, putting them onto freezing plates and that. And I mean all these things always fascinated me and I spent most of my time as I say around the fish factories and that and, along with a lot of my pals” Local resident, Shetland

Fish-based community events also play a part in a wider socialisation of seafaring within the case study areas. Fish is often a feature of local events where people either come together to catch fish or to eat it:

“Every year there’s a Eela competition... you go out on the small boat and catch fish and you have a weigh-in and then you drink lots of beer afterwards... So that brings the community together immensely. Everybody, the people that doesn’t go off on boats or isn’t able to go off on boats comes down for the weighing... It’s just an excuse I think to take drink to be honest. But they cook up the fish that’s caught after it and everybody eats this fish” Local resident, Voe, Shetland

Many of the local communities in Shetland hold an annual Eela competition to bring the local community together. The competition involves the local fishermen of the area going out in their boats and rod fishing within the three-mile inshore zone to compete for the biggest catch. All the fish that is caught is landed and cooked up for the community. There is often a

dinner and a dance that follows. Events therefore serve to embed fishing's place in the wider territorial community. Other events signified a powerful role that the sea and the harbour generally played in bringing people together in the town. At the 2010 Remembrance Sunday parade in Fraserburgh the Fishermens' Mission was one of several community service organisations to leave a wreath of poppies on the local memorial during the service. Also, at the time of the research, a Zumba class was held at the local leisure centre to raise money for the RNLI that brought together many people from the local community. In December every year in Fraserburgh, 'Father Christmas' comes in to the town on the RNLI lifeboat. He makes his way up to the main square on a sled and sells presents, again to raise money for the RNLI.

So growing up in Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland often involves being around the sea and with boats. This results in having a pool of people who often aspire to go fishing, or to sea-based occupations, whether it be the offshore oil or renewables industries, or the merchant navy:

"I intended to go in the merchant navy. As a young lad I was very interested to see the world... but then that's when the fishing started to be good... and then the Highlands and Islands Development Board came on the scene offering young men loans and grants for boats.... A lot of people took advantage. It was a great scheme" Retired fisherman, the Outer Hebrides

Sea-based aspirations continue to inspire many young people in the case study areas, thus informing notions of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community'. However, whilst the evidence would suggest that young people continue to be socialised into sea-faring jobs, it is increasingly common for them to be turning to non-fishing employment. In light of a shrinking fishing industry, young people now are increasingly looking to the offshore oil and renewables industries for employment. Established fishermen too, who are finding it difficult to keep their businesses going, are also seeking opportunities within the offshore industries. In the Outer Hebrides the renewables sector seems to have acted as a fall back for fishermen who have left the industry:

"[my wife's] brother, he was fishing actually with me for a good while but he left the fishing and... he's in the renewable industry now which a lot of the people... a lot of ex-fishermen have been tempted away to the renewables" Creel fisherman, the Outer Hebrides

A move away from fishing to the energy sector is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 (see section 5.4.3).

Whether or not a move to other sectors is related to the shrinking of the fishing industry, the out-migration of young people would appear to be a key concern for people in the case study areas, particularly for those who work in fishing. A widespread perception is that young people are increasingly choosing not to pursue a career on the islands, or in the fishing industry, because of having more attractive opportunities now not only in other trades and sea-faring industries, but also on the mainland. The pull of university also attracts people away from both fishing, and the case study areas in general. One interviewee, despite having returned to Shetland and now working in the fishing industry, gave a concrete example of why young people on the islands who have been exposed to fishing as children might choose to look beyond fishing at school leaving age:

“Our whole family... either works or has worked... as fishermen... I always had this thing I’d like to try it. So when they got a new boat... I joined up with them. I just detested it... I liked the environment and the sort of camaraderie on board, but what I didn’t like was that all my friends had... gone to university and all I was getting was phone calls and letters saying they were having the time of their lives... I was on this bloody iron hulk in the middle of the sea, spewing... I just sort of thought to myself “What the hell am I doing?” ken... In the old days you’d have had no choice - but there was a choice. And that swayed me. So I just finished and came ashore... I started doing like classes. It took me about two years before I got the armament to go and apply to uni” Onshore businessman, Shetland

The contraction of the industry was certainly a concern though. A factory owner in Fraserburgh and his son explained that there were people in the local area who wanted to join up and work in their factory but that the opportunities to take on more staff was not there because of a contracting and shrinking catching sector. Many fishing businesses now are struggling to provide financial help to those trying to get a start as a new entrant. A ship chandler, who was describing how his business was struggling to continue to support new people into the industry, said:

“Our sales are obviously dropping and that sort of hinders us for... looking at new projects... Our company will help the skipper get his boat and we’ll maybe take a 20% stake in the boat. So if we’ve no... spare cash, then obviously we can’t do anything like that like. So any new blood that wants to come in... it would sort of hinder us... for giving them a... financial leg up sort of thing” Ship Chandler, Fraserburgh

This, together with an increasing employment of non-nationals in the industry, conveys a gradual loss of highly specialised skills amongst local Scottish people, for example, in the



ability to build ships or be a deckhand on a fishing boat. Others had parents who worked in the fishing but they themselves had, for various reasons, been discouraged from entering the industry, and so had found employment elsewhere. A widespread perception is that labour practices are changing in Scotland's fishing industry. Skippers are increasingly taking on foreign nationals to crew their boats because they are cheaper and perceived to be more reliable employees. Fishermen in all three case studies said they either struggled to pay local people to crew the boats or found it difficult to find local crew members:

“My son joined me and he was with me for a couple of years. But then he wanted to go to university... I got another person who didn't last that long... I found finding a crew was difficult” Ex-fisherman, Uist, the Outer Hebrides

In summary, it is clear that whilst fishing is one narrative that is mobilised by coastal communities, there is a wider socialisation of seafaring activities in Scotland's fishing communities. Growing up with boats and use of a common language would appear to unite people, not only who work in the fishing industry but also in the wider territorial community. A wider sea-based identity informs many peoples' sense of self in the case study areas and is both apparent in and reinforced by local events. There are various factors that are perceived to be moving people away from fishing in Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland but a culture entwined with fishing would appear to persist, suggesting a deep attachment to a particular way of life that is both informed by and tied into the fishing industry.

### **3.5 Self-sufficiency**

Prevailing concepts of 'community' do not solely relate to fishing or the sea, however. A recurring narrative to come out strongly in the case study areas is that of a shared sense of vulnerability but also resilience to the unpredictable circumstances of living in remote locations, leading to a self-sufficient way of life. Self-sufficiency emerges as a key finding in understanding fisheries 'dependency' and 'community' in Scotland both from an economic point of view but also from a heritage point of view.

#### ***3.5.1 A culture of autonomy and flexibility***

A culture of autonomy, flexibility and a can-do attitude, that has been discussed in the earlier part of this chapter in relation to the fishing industry (see section 3.3), is also reflected in the

wider territorial communities. In the case study areas it is common for people to hold multiple jobs in order to make up their household income and to cover all of the services for the local community. For example a bus driver in one of the northern islands of Shetland, who was originally from the UK mainland, explained that as well as operating the bus, he also delivered ‘meals on wheels’ to local residents. He said having multiple jobs was just “how it was” up there.

Practices that suggest a deeply ingrained sense of self-sufficiency appear to be linked to past and ongoing crofting experiences and identities. Crofting was originally designed in the nineteenth century to give legal security of tenure to small land owners in the North West of Scotland. In the Outer Hebrides and Shetland, a tradition of crofting and fishing together underpins senses of ‘community’, both within fishing households but also beyond:

“That ties you to the island?... The fishing yes definitely, aye. But you work together with a wee bit of cattle as well” Creel fisherman, the Outer Hebrides

The importance of crofting for people in the island case study areas is linked heavily into family histories and community cultures. Several local fishing families in the Outer Hebrides and Shetland referred to their households not as fishing households but as crofting households:

“It’s as much a croft house as it is a fishing.... we’ve got about 40 sheep. So it’s very typical... your typical Shetlander ‘ll dabble a bit in crofting and fishing ‘ll be the main income. That’s the... historical thing. It’s changing a bit now but er, that’s how it always used to be” Fish Buyer, Shetland

Many people, both who fish and who do not, own livestock such as ponies or sheep and breed them to sell. Many people also own a fishing boat and a few creels and use them recreationally to catch crabs and lobsters. This includes both non-fishing respondents and also commercial fishermen. Such pluriactivity and dual occupation informs senses of autonomy, flexibility and resilience:

“I think we’re very resilient in terms of what we can do for ourselves. We’re very competent people who can turn their hands to anything. People build their own houses here, build their own boats... We’re very resilient, and people in Shetland I think could make a very very good job of continuing to harvest the sea and farm the sea” Local resident, Shetland

People in the Outer Hebrides suggested that owning crofts, growing one's own food, and carrying out one's own structural building and engineering work was perhaps due to there being very little money on the islands. A man in Barra was observed building the roof of his own house on a Saturday morning, whilst a fisherman described how most of his community owned cows and sheep. The receptionist of an inn in South Uist attended to several heating and electrical faults in the guest rooms during my stay, as well as serving breakfast to the guests and installing new shower rooms into the guest rooms. Both he and his wife owned crofts in the local vicinity. Meanwhile the goods for the grocery store in Barra are flown in from the mainland by pilots from Uist.

Whilst there is not a history of crofting in Fraserburgh, in many respects Fraserburgh functions as an 'island' community on the mainland and respondents there also highlighted a culture of self-sufficiency. To begin, the geographical location of Fraserburgh would appear to make it distinctive in many ways. Many respondents spoke about how the main transport links to the north east went as far as Aberdeen, and from there cut across the country diagonally to Inverness, thereby cutting off Fraserburgh and its surrounding towns and villages from the main transport links. As well as transport connections to Fraserburgh being limited, a local authority development worker explained that as a coastal community Fraserburgh is further disadvantaged by being surrounded by the sea on two of its sides:

“Spatially coastal communities are at a disadvantage... at best, they're only going to have... three directions in which they can expand. Fraserburgh in fact only has two. So when you look as to... which directions you're going to go in, you only have two choices. So that can lead to infrastructure issues” Local Authority employee, Fraserburgh

Linked to this feeling of geographical remoteness was the view that local attitudes played a role in standing the Fraserburgh area apart from the rest of the mainland. The local authority employee explained how the coastal region of the north east “had been isolated, almost self-isolated for many years. They were quite self-sustaining. When fishing was in its hey-day, they didn't need, nor did they want, too much contact with the outside world”. Other respondents suggested that in Fraserburgh a mindset of self-sufficiency still lingered. Some harbour tradesmen spoke about feeling unable to find work in their trades outside of the fishing industry, on inland projects, as a result of their skills being too specialised to the Fraserburgh harbour. This contrasts with evidence found in Shetland from engineers who had

worked on boats in the past but were now competing for, and securing, jobs away from Shetland and from fishing on the mainland of Scotland:

“If you have an attitude that you can’t compete and you don’t find a way round it you’re not going to be around much longer, if you’re in a market that’s diminishing. You have to try and... adapt to the circumstances that you have... If we were just reliant on the slips, we’d be struggling as well... One of the power stations we worked in was Peterhead power station so, if we can do it from Shetland, they can do it from Fraserburgh” Marine engineer, Shetland

However, evidence from Fraserburgh suggests that many in the local community and in the fishing industry can be cynical and suspicious of any outside investment or development. I was told that many of the local businesses are small and privately owned and, as a result, people liked to stick together:

“Everything’s private owned... every one of that boats that you see out there is private individually owned, no companies. It’s not like Aberdeen... you’re looking 60, 70 boats which is 60, 70 crews and every one is individual. It’s all small, small owned businesses just like myself... We all try and stick together a bit... it’s governed round the fishing” Harbour tradesman, Fraserburgh

And there was a sense by some outside of the fishing industry that the inherent self-isolation of the industry and community was not helpful for local development. One respondent, who was involved in local community development in the north east region, pointed out that there were limits to ‘self-sufficiency’ for fishing communities there. He suggested that whilst they might have been “almost willingly self-sufficient or isolated” in the past, “that was fine in times when things were good. But now physical isolation works against them”. He suggested that a co-existing process of fracturing and also cohesion within the local community is affecting the success of local development in the town:

“We were trying to get them to decide how to spend £XXXX of regeneration funds that had been allocated to them. And the area Chair came out straight away and said... “There’s nothing in here for [name of coastal village], so unless there’s something in here for [name of coastal village], nobody else is getting anything”... That leads to investor fright because where you’ve got a lack of cohesion... it’s much more difficult to attract money, because investors are less sure that they’re going to be welcomed with open arms. They don’t want to put themselves in the middle of a conflict and that has invariably happened in Peterhead, in Fraserburgh, in MacDuff, in Banff... and... it’s my belief that it stems from this innate defensiveness” Local authority employee, Fraserburgh

Senses of self-sufficiency emerged in different ways across the case study areas. For example, having ‘no choice’ but to get on with things on one’s own was something spoken about often, and informs notions of resilience in the communities. Coping with dangerous and unpredictable weather and general physical remoteness is a feature of everyday social and occupational routines for people, not only who work in the fishing industry, but also who live in the wider territorial community in the three case study areas:

“If you look at the history of Shetland, you know, it’s gone through some horrendous times... Before oil came, economically, it was a completely different place. And by nature of that, people had to be resilient, you know. Many people were crofters and fishermen and worked some very, kind of, dangerous work in order to sustain their families. And I think that’s almost just what is part of being a Shetlander is about, is that whole living in a remote island community. You have no choice” Local resident, Shetland

In Shetland respondents spoke about the need to find their “own solutions” to local issues. One local resident described how in their community a development initiative had been set up to try to “reverse the demise” of the local community:

“We’ve been involved in things like the local shop... social housing... I see it as kind of a distinct community. Really you’re at the end of the road... there is nowhere else to go... physically and I also think as a community... It is just different to anywhere else... people are different and there’s a huge thing about resilience and about... finding your own solutions, and about standing up and being proud... I mean even in Shetland, people from [name of local area] see themselves as being quite quite different to anybody else” Local resident, Shetland

A sense of having no choice, in Shetland in particular, may explain why so many on the islands are proactive and enthusiastic about Shetland and demonstrate a commitment to investing in its future. Within the fishing industry in Shetland there were technological advances and management systems yet to take shape in the other case study areas at the time of the research. For example the fish market in Shetland is operated through an electronic auction. In addition, Shetland has its own inshore fisheries management system, the Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO), that has the legal power to implement a number of licensing mechanisms and regulations within Shetland’s six-mile inshore zone. As a result of such powers, Shetland chose to turn down Scottish Government help to manage their local inshore fisheries through an ‘Inshore Fisheries Group’ (IFG). However a strong sense of dependence on each other also reflects a sense of vulnerability to living in a remote geographic location. In Shetland in particular respondents described the importance of

needing contact with the outside world, reflecting a community-wide drive to embrace new ideas:

“[What do you depend on?... What do you feel you need, or don’t want to live without?] Oh, well, public services. Erm, communications with the mainland. News. I suppose they’re the main things that I have in mind” Local resident, Lerwick, Shetland

Evidence to contradict a self-sufficient mind-set in the case study areas, for example the desire to seek external funding, is discussed in detail in Chapter 5. Mostly, the notion of self-sufficiency highlights one of the vulnerabilities that people face in Shetland and the Outer Hebrides, that they are geographically isolated and remote from other people and places, and subject to challenging weather and environmental conditions such that they need to be able to survive the elements without outside help:

“If you get a bad track of weather in the winter time and the boats don’t get out to sea... and the ferry from Aberdeen is... delayed say three nights, then the shelves in the supermarkets get bare... I still think that on the whole, people who live here have a sort of store-cupboard mentality, they would still have enough... in between deep freezes and cupboards they would be able to survive for quite a long time” Fisherman’s wife, Shetland

What this reveals about fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ is that the dual occupation of farming and fishing in the past in the Outer Hebrides and Shetland was often the only way of spreading risk. This is still the case today, where the pluriactive household remains a sound means of combating employment and income uncertainty. So a tradition of crofting and fishing together informs a wider culture of reciprocity and self-sufficiency. This is discussed further in the next section.

### ***3.5.2 Mutual dependence and reciprocity***

The harsh weather and remoteness of the Outer Hebrides and Shetland was talked about as the thing that made people on the islands feel most vulnerable, and it would seem that they cope with this through a culture of mutual dependence and reciprocity. Mutual dependence and reciprocity is all part of a social capital that helps build a community, where *trust* plays a key role in enhancing reciprocity and thus strengthening community relations (Glowacki-dudka et al., 2013; Pretty and Ward, 2001; Ostrom, 1998). Many respondents conveyed a sense that people in the case study areas look to each other for help on a daily basis. In the Uists and Barra, particularly, people explained that one did not need to be born there to be

part of the community. Just so long as they took part and took an interest in the well-being of the community then they would become part of it. It did not matter if someone fished or not, if one moves in from the mainland but contributes to the daily goings on of the islands and helps people out, then they are accepted into the community.

“If you’ve got a problem you’ve always got a neighbour to go to. It might be at home with the car... a creel stuck somewhere... a boat sinking.... you’re not going to be by yourself... as long as somebody else knows about it... It’s just a hand for a hand sort of thing. You give people a hand, they’ll give you a hand back... it’s not always monetary... you help each other and that’s the way small communities, I think, work” Creel fisherman, Barra, the Outer Hebrides

This culture of reciprocity is an inherent feature within the fishing industry also, and respondents spoke about a nature of benevolence embedded in people who made a living from the sea as a result of working under conditions of consistent danger and hardship:

“I’ve been a fisherman... my father was a fisherman, his father was a fisherman... I know what it’s like not to be getting fish... I think people who go out to brave the seas to make a living are bound to develop characteristics which can only enhance their lives and the lives of those around them” Local priest, the Outer Hebrides

But more broadly, helping each other out was what people referred to as the most important part of the territorial ‘community’ and included joining in and prioritising the well-being of the community. Helping out was seen to be crucial by both locally born people and also those who had moved in to the area:

“If you’re willing to give a bit then, you know, people are willing to give a lot ... It... struck me hugely about how supportive and inclusive the community can be... When you need them they’re all there” Shetland resident originally from mainland Scotland

Linked to a sense of contributing was the ability to work together with people and get along with one another. One respondent in Shetland said that “men are not prepared to... go the last mile for their earnings to the detriment of their neighbour”. This was reiterated many times in Shetland, reflective perhaps of the success of not only their local fisheries but also businesses in the wider community:

“When we first moved up... [name of wife] phoned round the various quarries... got a price for each one... but they were all completely different. So she got back to one of them saying “look, I can get what I’m wanting from somewhere else cheaper. Are you prepared to match it?”...

“Why would we want to match that? We are three separate businesses, if you’ve got that price from so and so then take it from them. I know him, he’s a nice guy. He’ll go to your house. In fact he’ll do more than we can do”... and she goes.... “I don’t get this at all, you don’t seem to be able to negotiate with these folk”... There’s a Shetland thing there... I think it comes from all having to live on the same island.... people realise that you can get one over on somebody now and again but it doesn’t really work” Local resident, Shetland

In light of this evidence it would seem clear that the ability to fit in is a crucial skill in fishing communities, and is born from a sense of vulnerability by being in a remote location. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

It is also apparent that those who do not demonstrate the ability to contribute to the well-being of the wider community, or who keep themselves to themselves, sit on the outside of the community. Several respondents pointed out individual houses, or clusters of houses, or areas that housed people who kept themselves to themselves, highlighting a ‘we/they’ mentality at work in the communities. In Fraserburgh a similar process was apparent, but here the issue of non-contributing community members was linked to delinquency (Elias and Scotson, 1994). In Fraserburgh, having ‘junkies’ at the end of the street was something most respondents spoke about as a feature of the town. The term ‘junkie’ was used to refer to those people who were thought to abuse drugs or alcohol and were regarded as “unemployable”. Some respondents pointed out blocks of flats where the ‘junkies’ lived, or areas around the back of the high street as the poorer areas of the town. However, many respondents also spoke of having personal connections to people who were regarded as a ‘junkie’, either a relative of theirs, or they had worked with one briefly, or they lived near them. This highlights the deeply contradictory nature of communities. Whilst ‘junkies’ might be seen as ‘they’ and in some way different or separate, they can also be ‘kin’, or part of the fishing community, or the place-based community.

In summary, this section has emphasised the pluri-active nature of fishing ‘communities’ in Scotland, looking at the tradition of crofting and fishing together to inform a wider culture of reciprocity and self-sufficiency. A history of pluri-activity and dual occupations inform autonomy, flexibility and resilience. The culture of self-sufficiency emerges as a response to a strong sense of vulnerability that people feel in the case study areas. People feel geographically isolated and remote from other people and places and feel subject to challenging weather and environmental conditions such that they need to be able to adapt and



be resilient. It seems that local values revolve around adaptability, resourcefulness and an ‘art’ to living in a remote place, with fishing a fundamental part of this.

### **3.6 Summary**

In summary, the findings reveal that there is a key set of established routines and shared practices for people involved with the fishing industry in Scotland that revolve around uncertainty, risk and spontaneity and which serve to bring people together into a fishing ‘community’. Resulting close and informal working relationships tie together people around the Scottish coastline into social networks that are often characterised by loyalty and trust. These networks are crucial for sustaining and renewing the fishing industry in Scotland. Not only those directly employed in the fishing industry, but also those who share the household of those directly employed, make up close and familial social networks that pervade the wider territorial community, and speak of a wide commitment to and investment in fishing. In addition, intergenerational practices such as spending time on boats from a young age, using a distinctive dialect, and sea-based community events serve to socialise many people in rural coastal Scotland into fishing and other sea-based occupations. Self-sufficiency emerges as a key finding in understanding fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ in Scotland where a culture of autonomy, flexibility and a can-do attitude that can be found in the fishing industry is reflected in the wider territorial communities. This includes helping each other out without immediate financial gain, and pluriactive household incomes building on a long tradition of dual occupation of farming and fishing as a way of spreading risk and developing resilience. As a result, fishing would appear to remain a defining feature for people of themselves, their place and their community.

Leipins’ (2000a) reconceptualization of ‘community’, that focuses on sets of shared practices, shows how people can unite and speak together, even if they are located in different places or have other differences. By reconceptualising community in this way Liepins says “... we have the opportunity to duly acknowledge the layers of meaning and difference in rural life while exploring the lived patterns of practical rural life and political struggles” (Liepins, 2000a, p.28). In so doing, she says it is possible to engage in diversity and differences in rural societies such that ‘community’ is not homogeneous but recognises that communication and action occur across difference. The evidence in this chapter has begun to reveal that understandings of the fishing community in Scotland are not clear cut, but complicated. The

fishing 'community' cannot be understood simply as a particular geographical location since people involved with the fishing have demonstrated that they can be tied to one another across specific geographic locations through, for example, use of a vernacular dialect or language. At the same time people do identify with their own place-based community that includes but also reaches beyond the fishing industry. In order to investigate the shape of fishing communities in Scotland further the next chapter looks at how people in fishing communities *feel* about their lives and routines, and explores the extent to which thoughts and emotions inform a better understanding of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community' in Scotland.

## Chapter 4. Shared communities of the mind

### 4.1 Introduction

A departure from the idea of ‘community’ as a *structure* that can be described, supported or acted upon from the outside is the understanding of ‘community’ as a set of interpretations and meanings between groups of people. Studies have shown that ‘community’ can be used to represent how a group of people think about themselves, each other and what they are doing, and which spills over to influence real behaviours and relations (Pahl, 2005; Liepins, 2000a; Cohen, 1985). Pahl (2005), in exploring imagined ‘communities’, advocates that understandings of ‘community’ based on materialistic or economic assumptions “should not be conceptually privileged over the real community-in-the-mind” (p.637). Communities of the mind, he says, based on personal feelings and experiences from community residents, sustain more powerfully, and demonstrate greater resilience and continuity, than ascribed territorial or occupational communities, or notions of community based on interlinking kinship networks. Does fisheries policy then need to think more about communities of the mind?

The previous chapter explored how everyday social and occupational routines bring people together into both ‘occupational’- and ‘place’-based communities. It also began to reveal how there are different groups of people contributing to different senses of ‘community’. This chapter examines ‘communities-in-the-mind’ to determine how far people in the case study areas see themselves as standing together with, or apart from, not only each other, but also the wider world, and the extent to which fishing plays a role in this. The chapter also considers how far people who fish share the same sets of thoughts and meanings about themselves and what they do, and to what extent that differs from people who do not fish. Two key themes that emerge from the analysis revolve around senses of empathy and grief, and shared feelings of freedom and autonomy associated with fishing. The latter, in particular, relates to a positive identity tied to fishing and perhaps goes some way to informing the kind of policies that will make a lasting difference to fisheries management. The chapter goes on to look at perceived ‘external threats’ within the communities that are serving to not only highlight the nature of the fishing ‘communities’ in Scotland, but also to reinforce them. Three external spectres are identified as being linked to a strong sense of

defensiveness within the case study areas: policy, science and the general public. A closing of ranks against outside interference is fuelled by a shared sense of frustration relating to reduced flexible strategies within the sector, and feelings of powerlessness and marginalisation. These meanings emerge as primary processes of boundary making at work that serve to further reinforce notions of the fishing community.

## **4.2 Connection to and empathy with those involved in fishing**

There is sense of ‘togetherness’ amongst people involved in fishing in the case study areas that is not place-specific but is informed through a mutual empathy for, and sense of attachment to, the fishing industry (see Chapter 3). Such implicit, or imagined, senses of ‘community’, fed by thoughts, feelings, meanings and emotions serve to inform and strengthen senses of ‘community’ based on ‘place’ and an occupation-based identity tied to fishing.

### ***4.2.1 The role of empathy in reinforcing senses of the fishing community***

The role of empathy in community-making amongst fishers in Scotland means ‘communities’ can cross geographical or place-based boundaries. For example, people involved in fishing, whether directly employed or living with somebody who works in the industry, reported feeling connected to others in fishing despite them often living in different locations:

“When you think about it... the fishing community, it isnay [is not] just Fraserburgh... you can come frae [from] MacDuff, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, you go over to Denmark... and you’re involved in a community a [of] sorts... it’s possibly a community within a community... the fishing community goes out with... be it [name of coastal town], be it Fraserburgh, be it wherever, there’s a link. There’s a tie-in, a connection.” Fisherman’s wife, Fraserburgh

A key feature of this connection between people involved in fishing is the perception that one can readily empathise with a group of people that they may never have met before. For example, an ex-fisherman on the island of Grimsay in North Uist described feeling connected to other places in the Outer Hebrides because they were ‘fishing’ places:

“I think I’d talk about coming from the Western Isles which people might recognise or you could at least point to on a map... If I thought they knew about Grimsay I’d say Grimsay probably, because it does explain a lot... On Harris, there’s a similar island called Scalpay

which has a similar sort of background and you know the people who are on Scalpay are linked by the same sort of... fishing... I don't really know hardly any of them but... I would probably feel that I did empathise with them quite a lot" Ex-fisherman, Uist, the Outer Hebrides

A fundamental driving force of this empathy is compassion for the lifestyle and hardships that people involved in fishing endure. Compassion for one another appears to be fundamental in bringing people together who work in the fishing industry:

"You've seen the decommissioning, you've seen them try and survive... and you want... like when your friend's husband on another whitefish boat, when you hear they've broken down, you feel that. You feel like, oh, I'm really sorry to hear that. You're wanting everybody to survive this. But how long they can, I don't know" Fisherman's wife, Shetland

As a result, whilst respondents were keen to identify themselves differently to one another according to which town or village they were from, when probed they all spoke of being from the same source. One interviewee, when asked if he felt that the coastal towns and villages around Fraserburgh were "one big community", replied "It is. It is. Even though they're separate... Just because it's involved with the fishing. Everybody's close and everybody works with one another". Another, in Shetland, highlighted the features of risk and uncertainty, prevalent in the lives of people involved in the fishing industry, as bringing people together emotionally, not only those who work in the sector, but also people who live in and amongst them:

"Any community that takes a living from the sea is exactly the same, whether its Faroe or Norway, the Western Isles, north east Scotland, wherever. People are risking their lives, they're going to sea, they're away from home, all those things are the same... and that maybe involves the wider community more in fishing... I think there's a ground swell of wider community support for fishing in Shetland" Local resident, Shetland

So people spoke of a connection generally between everyone involved in the fishing industry regardless of location. In addition, the wider territorial community also demonstrated a connection to and empathy with fishing, that served to reinforce place-based identities linked to fishing:

"Most people are involved somewhere because although they're not part... their brother is or their father or, everybody thinks they're from a fishing community, whether they're at the fishing or no" Local resident, Whalsay, Shetland

People in the towns and the villages in the case study areas tend to share strong family ties and personal histories linked to fishing. Evidence from Fraserburgh illustrates this well. The town of Fraserburgh was described as a ‘fishing community’ by several respondents who did not work in the sector, but who spoke of fishing being fundamental to the town. Whilst these respondents could not describe their households as ‘fishing households’, because there was no-one living in them who worked in the fishing industry, the industry has played a key role either in their own family history, or in the history of the town or place that they identify with. Together with those respondents who did work in the fishing industry, these non-fishing respondents spoke about how, having been isolated from other industries, fishing has always been one of the main lines of work for people living in the area. There were two respondents, for example, who were both children of working fisher women. They both individually had a family history of fishing and a deep understanding of the fishing industry and the fishing way of life. Despite having never worked in the industry themselves, both men, when asked if Fraserburgh was a fishing community, said “yes” and “definitely”. The house of one of them was decorated with photographs of fishermen and fisherwomen. He explained that his mother, who had been a herring packer, had urged him to get a trade instead of going into fishing, despite all his brothers going into the industry. The other explained that he had also been encouraged to become a tradesman instead of following his family into fishing, but could recite the names of all the different boats in the surrounding area, since many of his friends from school now worked on them.

However, whilst on one hand, the perception that fishing is fundamental to Fraserburgh serves to create a place-based ‘fishing’ identity, and is reinforced by the connection that people who live there have to the fishing, on the other hand there are contrasting and contradictory views. A minority of respondents in Fraserburgh felt fishing was no longer fundamental to the town. One respondent, originally from a different part of Scotland and who lived outside Fraserburgh, but who worked at the harbour, suggested that if the fishing vessels were to disappear from Fraserburgh there would be little impact. Another, also not originally from Fraserburgh and who also lived outside the town, described the cars travelling out Fraserburgh each morning in the direction of Aberdeen as being “nose-to-nose”, implying that the majority of people who lived in Fraserburgh actually worked in Aberdeen and were not connected to the fishing.

Probing further into senses of the fishing ‘community’ in all three case study areas, it would seem that whilst in one sense the ‘fishing community’ is tied to a particular place, in other

ways it is not. It can extend far beyond place and it can even be expressed within a wider sense of the territorial community:

“The fishing community... it is nae completely separate from the overall community but there’s a tie-in with the fishing communities in Fraserburgh, Peterhead, it can be a family tie-in, it can be a business tie-in... The fact is, you socialise with these folk because they are fishing, fishermen or fishing-related” Fisherman’s wife, Fraserburgh

Connection to, and empathy with, fishing in the three case study areas then is complex. It occurs between people involved in fishing and also comes from those in the wider community. It comprises both people who work directly in the fishing industry and a majority who do not but who live in the wider territorial area.

One of the main reasons that people give for being able to connect or empathise with the fishing, regardless of whether or not they work in the industry, is that they live close to someone who does work in the fishing industry, either as a neighbour or a friend, and as a result have an awareness of the issues that these people face as a result of working in the industry, namely *risk* and *uncertainty*. Risk and uncertainty are two key attributes of fishing as an occupation and also as a way of life, as outlined through the daily routines and practices of people in Chapter 3. For example, fishing is not only one of the most dangerous occupations physically, but also one where the outcomes of an individual fishing trip or fishing season are uncertain. Weather conditions, an abundance or mix of species on the grounds, and market prices on landing are all constantly changing and unpredictable factors that people in the fishing industry deal with on a daily basis. How fishers cope with this daily risk is complex. A sense of community solidarity would seem to play a significant role in the coping strategy for a way of life characterised by risk and uncertainty, and is discussed in more detail in the later part of this chapter (see section 4.4.). A distinguishing feature of the communities is the ability to come to terms with ‘fate’ and ‘bad luck’, both of which are difficult to avoid or guard against. This is discussed next.

#### **4.2.2 Grief and loss**

One of the most commonly cited unifying features amongst respondents in the case study areas was empathy created within the industry as a result of losing loved ones to the sea. At the time of the field work in Shetland three fishermen had recently lost their lives whilst out fishing, illustrating the reality of the dangers involved in the occupation. Understanding what

it is like to lose and/or grieve for someone who has been lost at sea emerged as a key factor in uniting people within and across the different fishing communities.

The majority of respondents throughout the case study areas said that they clearly understood what it was like to empathise for lost fishermen and their families. In Fraserburgh more or less every person spoken to knew somebody who was involved in the fishing industry, and understood that a key feature of being in the industry was the possibility, and sometimes eventuality, of losing one's life whilst out at work on a boat. Most people on shore had the experience of losing a loved one to the sea, grieving, or supporting someone in grief:

“I would think in the villages and in a lot of the houses in Fraserburgh there isn't one family that hasn't been at some time touched by somebody lost at sea... Arthur... in all the boats they've had, never lost anybody at sea... One of the crew was lost and his son, when he was on the boat went over and they couldn't get him. They had a hold of him by a hook but they lost him, and he had to go home and tell his wife, and the boy's wife, and he's never ever been the same since... This is why the fishing sector... because it is such a dangerous sector... why fishing communities... they have to sustain you. They have to share your happiness and... your grief. And there's been a lot of grief. And most fishing communities... it doesn't matter where they are... you can go to any fishing community and if somebody says “oh I lost my...” you know, you can immediately empathise with them” Local resident, Fraserburgh

Loss, as a prevailing feature of the ‘fishing community’, is reflected in the work of the Fishermen's Mission, whose primary role it is to go to peoples' houses to comfort the families of men who have died. A member of one of the local fishermen's missions, when asked about the local ‘fishing community’, said that the ‘fishing community’ extended all around the country because “If one man dies at sea up here, they feel it in Cornwall”.

It is also evident that a capacity to empathise for people who have lost loved ones to the sea extends beyond the industry to the wider community:

“I suppose you didn't really define it as a fishing community it was just part of where you lived and, you know, everybody you knew nearly had, had somebody who was involved in the fishing industry... and there was a lot of people lost in the fishing industry so everybody felt it... If somebody from the other end of the town, village, was lost at sea then everybody went to the funeral and paid their respects” Local resident, Fraserburgh

The process of grieving and its importance in people's communities has been explored in Australian ‘suburbia’ (McManus, 2008). McManus writes, “As loss and bereavement is a key



facet of life experience, it has profound consequences for people's life worlds, in terms of their day-to-day activities, life histories and sense of belonging and place.... 'Even though it is often in the institutional space of the hospital that the acute moments of birth and death occur in the twentieth century, the process of dying (and grieving) occurs largely in the domestic space, alongside the process of daily life'" (p.176). Within the case study areas, the regularity of people dying within the context of fishing means that the process of grieving within the local territorial communities is tied to a fishing boat, a fishing household, a fishing business, the social networks surrounding a person, and also the wider industry and territorial community. And grieving in this way would appear to embed people into fishing further. People in Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland continue to pursue jobs in the fishing industry regardless of losing relatives or friends:

"My brother was a fisherman. He lost his life when he was 38. He was drowned... So, I mean, this job to me was always more than just a job. It was a passion. It was something that I really believed in and I knew the fishing industry warts and all... the good side but I also knew all sides of it" Fisheries representative, Fraserburgh

As well as the experience of losing friends or family at the fishing, people also spoke about losing people in other sea-faring activities. In the Outer Hebrides there is the famous incident of men returning home to the islands from the first world war on the yacht 'Iolaire', and of their boat running into trouble just a hundred metres or so from the Stornoway harbour lights, with the majority losing their lives (Stornoway Historical Society, 2010). In Fraserburgh there is a statue outside the RNLi station of a man looking out to sea wearing a life jacket. It is a memorial to the people who have lost their lives as RNLi volunteers in Fraserburgh since 1919. In total there were 13 people who had done so, involving three separate incidents and one that happened just at the mouth of the harbour.

There is another acute notion of 'loss' evident in the case study areas beside that of people dying out at sea, and that is grieving for the loss of the fishing industry, a fishing way of life, and the decommissioning of a fishing vessel. A fisherman at the harbour in Fraserburgh told me that there were lots of places around the northeast coast that used to fish but that do not fish now and expressed sadness for the loss of what once was a more widespread fishing industry. Onshore tradesmen also lamented the contraction of the industry, with one describing the decommissioning of the local boats as "soul destroying":

“I hate to see that boats get broke up. I dinnae like to see that like. Ken [you know], some of that boats we actually wired and that when they were new. And they’re breaking them up now... I dinnae like to see that like” Ships electrician, Fraserburgh

Respondents who did not work directly in fishing also expressed concern at the thought of losing the industry:

“I wouldn’t like to imagine a time when there are no fishing vessels in the port... I think that would be a dreadfully sad day... The communities of Fife where that’s happened, for instance, I think it’s terribly sad. Attrition suggests that... there will only be a few survivors and that the vessels will be... larger and that they may find difficulty eventually getting into places like Fraserburgh. Not at the moment, but who knows. But it would be a sad day” Local authority employee, Fraserburgh

Speaking to fishermen who had decommissioned their boats was a particularly challenging part of the research. A local fisherman in his late fifties came into the fisherman’s mission for his lunch one day in Fraserburgh and explained that he had just decommissioned his boat. He said he had taken the electrics off the hull that morning. When asked what he planned to do, he said he was retiring but wore an expression of regret that could even have been shame. A local crew member with him who looked younger also appeared in great pain. They had hearty plates of food in front of them but looked as if they had no appetite. They explained that they had one Filipino on board who would probably be moving on to another ship, but for the rest of the crew, they were all now out of work. A decommissioned fisherman in Shetland also conveyed the distress of decommissioning his boat:

“It’s the next thing to your family, your boat. Because when you think about it, you spend many nights on it and you’re very dependent on it... you get really bad weather and a boat becomes part of you and that’s how it is... It’s not like a car, or a bus or something... it’s almost a live object in some ways. It’s certainly different... The guy that broke up our boat... when I left I wouldn’t look back down the pier... Just up the pier, finished. And he phoned and... said was I wanting photos and I said “absolutely no way”.” Decommissioned fisherman, Shetland

Ironically, there was also a sense that the contraction of the industry may actually be serving to reinforce senses of ‘community’. A pelagic fisherman explained that because the pelagic industry was now so small, everyone involved was much closer than in the past:

“There’s so small an amount of boats, I mean I’m equally friendly with people in Shetland as I am from Fraserburgh... If there was a hundred pelagic boats you wouldn’t know everybody.

Because there's so little, you're virtually affiliated... you know everyone... the fact that there's so few of us has kind of brought us closer together, if that makes sense" Pelagic fisherman, Fraserburgh

In summary, this section has explored the power of empathy in community-making and how such imagined 'communities' serve to strengthen understandings of the fishing 'community' based on 'place' and/or 'occupation'. Grief and loss play a major role in helping people connect with one another in the case study areas. Feelings of loss and grief attached to the fishing industry links to another theme that persists throughout the data that revolves around a shared regard for a way of life based on freedom, autonomy and self-responsibility. This is explored in the next section.

### **4.3 Passion for fishing: valuing freedom, autonomy and fishing identity**

Current notions of fisheries 'dependency' focus heavily on fleet profitability and the renewal of the fishing industry (Symes, 2000b; Lindkvist, 2000). However the data would suggest that people in Scotland depend on fishing in ways that extend beyond employment and personal income to incorporate a shared emotional attachment to fishing.

#### ***4.3.1 A positive fishing identity***

Whilst income and employment are clearly central to fisheries 'dependency', 'dependency' also includes a deep emotional attachment to a way of life that is characterised by autonomy, freedom and risk:

"I came to this job because I like the fishing... and I want to stick out the fishing... It's just what I said to you, it's like the thrill of the catch... it's going out there and doing something that nobody, nay [not] a lot of folk can do like... Anybody can go to supply boats... and tie a rope like, you know anybody can go to the oil rigs and push a pump... but not a lot of folk can go out there and shoot nets and trawl up something from the bottom of the sea and fill a box"  
Prawn skipper, Fraserburgh

Nadel-Klein (2003; 2000) has described the history of fishing as one in which those involved were proud of what they did because of the danger and hardship involved in the job. She explains that a strong sense of identity has been a resource for fishers historically because of

their marginalised and powerless position in society. The importance of this identity explains why fishers continue to fish, even when it is no longer economically viable to do so.

Doing something that “not a lot of folk can do” is suggestive of a deep pride for fishing that would appear to be held by many people who work in the fishing industry in Scotland. A sense of freedom and autonomy is a fundamental part of life as a fisherman and an attraction for many:

“[what made you choose fishing and not merchant navy?] Well I like the fishing... the merchant navy never appealed very much... I worked at the fishing... because of the freedom... Though you are working for somebody, you had a lot of freedom. We don't have so much now because too many rules and regulations” Pelagic skipper, Shetland

Respondents throughout the three case studies also described a ‘passion’ for fishing. The process of acquiring a fishing boat for the first time was understood as a sort of ‘coming of age’ for a fisherman, with subsequent processes of getting a bigger boat or having a boat refitted a sign of success and indicative of a personal commitment to fishing for the long-term. At the time of the research a fisherman in North Uist was fishing for velvet crab but was finding it incredibly difficult to make money, but he explained that he had trained as a joiner originally and had struggled just doing the working hours of 9 to 5 because of the nature of working for someone else. As a fisherman, he said that he could be up at 4 and stay until 7 in the evening because he loved the work so much and the sense of achievement that working for himself brought.

In Fraserburgh several respondents explained that commercial fishing was their occupation of choice despite the many challenges and uncertainties that the fishing industry faces:

“I get up in the morning and I love what I do. So I mean my job's like a hobby... It must be great to be in my position to be able to get up for work and think I love what I'm doing. I mean it's the outside restrictions and everything that's the bad aspects, but the actual doing what I actually do, I love doing it. My sons love doing it” Pelagic fisherman, Fraserburgh

People often went to university after school, or went and worked in a company for a few years, or took an apprenticeship, but many explained that it was all just passing the time before they would be in a position to buy a boat and be a fisherman. Many are eventually drawn back to fishing:

“He spent seven years in the merchant navy and he qualified as a marine engineer. And three or four years ago he packed it in and bought a fishing boat and he’s been fishing ever since... He enjoys it and he’s passionate about it. He works incredibly hard” Fisherman’s father, Stornoway, the Outer Hebrides

Positive feelings of freedom, risk and autonomy that inform a fishing identity would also appear to pervade the fabric of households and is a key feature of the fishing community. Fishing families demonstrated a pride in fishing and in their fishing identity, with symbols from their boats on display in their houses. In the hall landing of a pelagic fisherman’s house was embedded the wooden name plaque from his boat that he used to own. In another pelagic family’s house facing the front door there was an enormous wooden ship’s steering wheel on the wall above the door, and to the right a painting of the family’s boat. Many respondents from fishing families spoke about there being something inherently emotional and appealing about their fishing boats. Several respondents described a deep emotional and personal attachment to their boat:

“The fishing is so important to me because it’s so important to my husband. He has known no other way of life... The boat, it means more than just a lump of metal because we’ve seen it built, we’ve built it up and he’s the engineer and he takes such pride in the engine and when he’s home, he’s still phoning engineers, making sure things are okay” Fisherman’s wife, Shetland

One respondent described how his fishing boat was almost like a family ‘pet’:

“If you ask any of my children what passwords they have then you can bet that’s what... it’ll be... the [name of boat] to them is a part of their upbringing... I used to steam in by with the boat on a Saturday morning when they were young kids... I would always have to toot the horn and they would come and they would wave nappies and clothes... they always have extreme affection for the boat cos it was so much part of their life” Retired fisherman, Shetland

So as well as a sense of freedom and a passion for fishing, a sense of pride in one’s fishing identity appears to be an inherent part of working in the fishing industry, illustrating that for many a fishing identity in Scotland is a positive source of self-identity. However, fishermen also described how the important features of freedom and autonomy were beginning to change as a result of wider pressures on the industry. This is picked up later in section 4.4.

### ***4.3.2 Resistance to diversification***

Strong feelings of passion for, and commitment to, the industry relate to a resistance to diversifying away from the industry in the case study areas. People who work in fishing communities in Scotland tend to be used to change, as fishing communities have constantly had to cope with change. Therefore it is important to understand the nature of any resistance to diversification, and what exactly is being resisted.

Where there were once towns and villages that had around 90% of the local population taking an income directly from the fishing industry, the economic fabric of traditional fishing areas in Scotland now is diverse (see Chapter 5). Not only this, but many households whose income portfolio was once entirely fed by the fishing industry now supplement the household income from multiple sources, demonstrating an ability to diversify in various contexts and areas. Whilst many people now work pluriactive households, it would seem that there are perceived costs to diversifying away from fishing, many of which are implicit, and personal. For example, a strong sense of a fishing identity associated with passion, pride and autonomy may explain why many within the industry find it difficult to consider, or feel unequipped for, diversifying away from fishing:

“We’re diversifying... as much as we can... likes of next week, I’m going away on an oil job... we’ll have seven days that I’m getting paid seven days. I won’t use any fishing days, I won’t use any quota and I won’t use near so much fuel... still money coming into the business... Crew men getting a... guaranteed wage. But... that’s our limit... we can’t do anything else... It’s either that or... do Mediterranean cruises” Prawn skipper, Fraserburgh

Many people simply do not want to move away from fishing due to the demands that stem from diversifying. These might include the inability to exercise the basic skills learnt while being a fisherman, or the lack of opportunity to practice local ecological knowledge, or make judgements associated with fishing. In Shetland a decommissioned fisherman explained that diversification had been especially painful. He had decommissioned almost a decade previously but spoke of recently considering returning to the industry:

“When I came to work here... my heart wasn’t here at all... it took me a long time... to accept that I wouldn’t be going back to... the fishing... Even up to maybe a couple of years ago I still harboured notions of going back because things had improved in certain aspects of the job” Ex-fisherman, Shetland

Levels of autonomy, in particular, stood out as something on which people were not prepared to compromise. In the Outer Hebrides some fishermen described how they had moved into tourism to keep their businesses going. Autonomous tourist ventures appeared to be preferable to trying to find a job in aquaculture for those who had spent a life working for themselves on a fishing boat. Several fishermen described how they took tourists out to spot dolphins or visit some of the remoter islands of the archipelago. Others spoke of having reduced their fishing and of setting up Bed and Breakfast accommodation to make money, reflecting some of the household strategies of Lofoten in Norway following the 1990s fishing crisis (Peterson, 1996).

The inability to practice local specialised skills also stood out as something people did not want to move away from. For example, onshore tradesmen described not wanting to diversify away from the fishing industry:

“A few of us might be coming... together. There’s the likes of the painter, a builder, maybe a plumber, ourselves. Build a block... of flats. I get the sparkie work, the painter gets the painting work... hopefully you get paid for your job and maybe, if you’re lucky, there might be something extra... If that works we could maybe carry it on. But it’s not what we want to do”  
Harbour electrician, Fraserburgh

In Fraserburgh there is a perception amongst onshore businessmen that their skills are not easily transferable to occupations and contexts outside of the fishing industry. For example, a fish agent explained that outside of the industry he was neither a qualified auctioneer nor a qualified accountant, such that these professions were not available to him should he wish to move on. A harbour tradesman also explained how diversifying out of the fishing industry was not straightforward:

“There is work to get, but... it’s hard to do the marine work and the other work as well, ken, just for instance, take a house right, we can [do work on] a house no problem. But if someone shouts from the marine you go down there and its oil and dirt and blackness and you can’t go up to a house after that (laughter). There’s black hand prints out on roofs and (laughter) it doesn’t work. It doesn’t work. And it’s hard to compete, it’s almost impossible to compete with one man bands... They do the houses... working for yourself and... getting ten quid an hour... I’m paying my boys more than that... So it’s a dead loss... You can’t compete with it” Harbour tradesman, Fraserburgh

Shetland stood apart from the other two case studies, in the success of both offshore and onshore diversification. Here people appear to have had more success diversifying away from the fishing industry. Part of this may be related to differences in attitudes and aspirations for the future, something that is discussed in more depth in Chapter 5. But it may also be in part due to being able to retain levels of autonomy. For example, onshore tradesmen in Shetland would appear to be already servicing a range of industries. An engineer explained that his business was not looking to depend on fishing any longer:

“We do a lot of... maintenance on fishing boats as well as general engineering, oil industry related work [so it’s not just fishing?] No, no. You couldnae survive on fishing nowadays... we’ve expanded into basically oil and gas and sort of civil engineering maintenance... pier works and stuff like that” Onshore engineer, Shetland

However, despite successful diversification away from the fishing industry in Shetland, it was also argued that the islands were investing into Shetland’s fishing industry. The fishing was spoken about in Shetland as the islands’ “backbone” and “main industry, far bigger than the oil”, and the local authority there would appear to be trying to retain fishing as a major industry, reflecting a wider community importance for fishing.

In summary, key features of autonomy, freedom and specialisation characterise individual and collective identities in the case study areas. People who work in fishing are emotionally and psychologically attached to their jobs. A positive sense of passion and pride for fishing pervades fishing households, and also the wider community. In this way, whilst people have, and are, diversifying away from fishing, it comes with both economic and social costs, in terms of personal identity and opportunity.

Regardless of any success in diversifying away from the fishing industry in the case study areas, a widely held perspective within the communities is that externally imposed policy rules and regulations are pressing people to find alternative employment away from fishing. The threats perceived from the policy measures, and any consequence of them, are not straight forward. The remainder of this chapter explores the way people in the case study areas are thinking about these external threats and the perceived effects that they are having on their lives.



## **4.4 A closing of ranks**

The way people are thinking about fisheries policy and the perceived effects that policy restrictions are having on their lives unearths a problem of disconnect with policy and science. People living and working in fishing communities in Scotland have described feeling ‘under attack’ from a wider public, including the larger community, society and government. A major consequence of this is a collective feeling of defensiveness against the outside world, which may also be reinforcing senses of the fishing ‘community’. External threats that present themselves in the minds of people living and working in the fishing communities would appear to fall into the categories of ‘policy’, ‘science’ and ‘the public’. The following section is structured around these three external spectres, before going on to discuss feelings of ‘defensiveness’.

### ***4.4.1 Dissatisfaction with policy decisions***

A collective sense of dissatisfaction with what are considered to be externally imposed policy measures emerges as an important feature in reinforcing sense of community in Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland. There is a widely held view in the case study areas that although government schemes like decommissioning are voluntary, the fishing industry is being forced to contract:

“The days at sea thing... if it was good, these boys wouldn’t be decommissioning their boats. They would still be here, they’d still be employing people, still be generating work. But... they’re getting an escape... It’s not that they want to go out. It’s more or less that some of them’s being forced to take it out” Harbour tradesman, Fraserburgh

A major concern is that fisheries policy is top down, distant, centralised and lacking local specificity. Despite efforts in Scotland to develop local fisheries management approaches, there continues to be a perception that fisheries policy making is too centralised and distant from local fisheries. For example, there was widespread resentment for rules that were seen as being made in Edinburgh, London or Brussels, and where fishing methods, that are perceived to be working well in one area, are being restricted nationally on the grounds of a decision to address a perceived problem in another area:

“This ban came out on mono-netting which was to do with salmon... that affected us because... the nets we were using... were mono although we never ever seen a salmon in them... We had to switch nets to a multi mono... just to stay legal... The multi mono nets were a lot more

difficult to clear and they caught a lot more by-catch so they were actually more destructive to the sea bed... Then that cod recovery zone came in... we'd never seen a cod in our net but anyway, we got affected by that" Creel fisherman, Barra, the Outer Hebrides

Many people spoke about how decision-makers did not understand the practicalities of the fishing industry, what was driving people involved in fishing and why they behaved the way they did. It is perceived by local people within the case study areas that community views and experiences are not getting heard at decision-making level, despite there being fisheries representatives present at government policy meetings. Furthermore, there would appear to be no shortage of ideas at local level for improving fisheries management. In a class of fishermen taking their skipper's ticket exam in Stornoway it was suggested that it would be possible in the Outer Hebrides to self-police pot limitations. They explained that because serial numbers are unique to vessels, pot limitations would be simple to enforce - all a local fisherman has to do if they suspect someone is exceeding their limit is to pick up a pot and read the serial number on it. They said that once a tag is lost, it comes out of the system so self-policing is easy. They also said there should be different pot limits for those fishing for prawns and those fishing for velvet crab, highlighting a local knowledge and sensitivity to the different fisheries. However, because of these views at community level that local ideas are not being taken on board by decision makers, a fisherman in Harris explained that local fishermen in his area now were leaving their local fisheries organisations because they did not feel that they were getting any benefits from it. There was a sense of frustration and powerlessness felt by local fishermen, with several complaining that they had been trying to make changes using their local fisheries organisations for years but that nothing was happening. For some respondents this was eroding their faith in the capacities of their local fisheries organisations. So there is a sense locally of feeling marginalised to the decision-making process. Even within the Shetland islands, that has its own Regulating Order and control over its inshore fishery, respondents felt powerlessness. There were concerns over CFP proposals and about not being able to influence fishing rules and regulations for the local demersal and pelagic fisheries.

Furthermore, government policy decisions are being blamed for eroding fundamental flexibilities and undermining the necessary features of self-sufficiency and flexibility required to fish sustainably. Whilst many of the rules come into play in response to a fear of overfishing certain species, there is a widespread perception within the communities that the rules are exacerbating environmental problems. Fishermen explained that they needed

flexibility in the catching process when operating within mixed fisheries, describing inherent problems with not being able to diversify their fishing methods. Increasing restrictions on fishing gear and methods were frequently cited as preventing inshore fishermen from harvesting local fisheries, with fishermen being described by people in the wider community as “boxed into a corner” or put in “straight-jackets”. Several respondents with a knowledge of fishing explained that rules that try to force fishermen into one bracket increases pressure on the fish stocks:

“It’s taken away opportunity... you could diversify into just about anything you wanted if you saw an opportunity to do it. But this is what I feel just now is that people are being put in a straightjacket with their licences and... it’s causing overfishing of the stocks... We would probably have gone from scallops into something else if we were allowed to do it... the fact that you are all the time at the one species... keeps putting pressure on the stock... You would be fishing it after it becomes uneconomical because you’ve nowhere else to go” Ex-fisherman, Uist, the Outer Hebrides

As well as restrictions on gear and fishing methods, the quota system is also thought to be preventing fishermen from flexibly accessing their local resource:

“There was about six boats in the Western Isles used to fish for ‘dogs’ and it was a good fishery. We caught what we were targeting. You had a by-catch of tope... which again we could sell, and apart from that we caught nothing else... it took the pressure off the shellfish stocks because... those six boats... they were doing something different. And stroke of a pen, I’ve got 30 nets sitting down at the pier and the net holder over at the shed” Creel fisherman, Harris, the Outer Hebrides

Overregulation was a widespread concern among fishers who said that they were finding difficulty contending with the sheer number and complexity of rules, ranging from days at sea, quotas, closed areas, to electronic log books:

“You’ve got ‘x’ amount of days in a year you can fish; you’ve got your reduced quotas... then you go off and fish somewhere, then you realise you’re in a ‘Closed Area’ that you didn’t know was closed... The staffing with an electronic log book, which I have absolutely no interest in whatsoever, the principle is quite good but needless to say it’s completely over-complicated... It’s a simple thing that they’re trying to do but they give it this software to some high-tech computer wizard that’s drawn up this programme that’s not workable if you’re interested in computers. But when you’re holding on to a laptop in a force 8 gale trying to put in a report

every day; and it's just going through all this nonsense each day each day each day" Whitefish fisherman, Shetland

Secondary policy effects would also appear to be frustrating people who work in the industry. Scottish fishermen described feeling themselves having to discard more and more in order to remain within the rules of the game:

"They were getting good catches. And I think that made it really hard for us to understand... How can you be conserving stocks when you're throwing it all back?... My husband comes home and says "Look we had to dump ten boxes of cod just to keep our one box of haddocks" and things like that" Fisherman's wife, Whalsay, Shetland

What was particularly difficult was the perception that there were being 'criminalised' for it:

"I have a solicitor friend... and he says as far as he's concerned the most regulated people he knows is fishermen and lawyers. He says... "Fishermen... you're virtually like a tagged criminal"... [Do you feel like a criminal as a fisherman?] I don't feel like a criminal, no. But I feel I'm regarded as one. The way I'm being treated... by the enforcement agency" Pelagic skipper

Whist discarding fish at sea may well be regarded as 'criminal' by the wider public, it would seem those in the fishing industry are feeling the pain of discarding fish more than anyone:

"We have a Banff boat that comes here.... He was due in here on Sunday past and... because of some new quotas coming out at midnight tonight... he chose to fish on 'til today... After that he doesn't know what he's going to do. He cannae land any ling, megrim, coley... he thought that if he did go back out he would need to dump about 90% of what he catches so what's the point?" Haulage operator, Shetland

Discarding marketable fish is something that goes against the grain of being a fisherman, with one decommissioned fisherman saying "There's no fishermen that wants to throw back fish. Why would you want to do such a thing? The discards are purely TAC [fixed quotas] induced". Another said:

"I've got two sons that's chosen to go down this path. As you can see I've got a huge investment. Now surely it goes without saying that someone that's chosen to stay in the industry, thinks there's a future for their sons, their sons have chosen that path as well because they think there's a future in it, you honestly think that's going to be the stakeholder that's

going to try and destroy it?... Would I be the stakeholder that's trying to destroy the industry, by overfishing or, something like this?" Pelagic skipper

Quota cuts would appear to be making people in the fishing industry feel particularly vulnerable, for personal as well as financial reasons. Fishermen said that they felt pushed into blackfish landings by the quota rules:

"I'm absolutely sure that the quota system that we've lived under since about 1979, 1980, the first it did was it created the black market... you had several species, cod, haddock, whiting mainly. And so what happened was instead of throwing the fish away men started to say "oh I'm not going to throw good fish away. Lets sell them"... And it evolved all through Europe, not just in the UK" Fisheries representative

"The Scottish fleet have jumped through hoops in the last ten year like.. They've put on bigger square mesh panels, we've upgraded our twine, we've took a reduction in days, we've took a cut in quotas... When do they actually start giving back something like? I mean... we're border line running here... you just cannot go any lower... And all you're going to do is, we're just going to go back in life, we're going to go back to blackfish landings, because that's what people will be forced to do to make a living" Trawler fisherman

Cuts in quota and fishing effort certainly can threaten the amount of money that fishing vessels can make and a decline in a boat's income is often not an option for skippers. However, several respondents also explained that as a result of quota cuts there has been an increasing shift towards more intensive and dangerous fishing. It was common to hear stories of skippers fishing longer hours and taking more risks out at sea in order to secure a good catch. One man explained that his son recently stayed out in bad weather on a fishing trip in order to maximise his catch before coming back to the harbour, but as a result was caught amongst 30 foot waves and had to keep the boat facing into the waves for 12 hours to prevent it from capsizing. Fishermen also appear to be having to make more ruthless business decisions to survive. They described feeling forced to choose to either exit the sector or do more aggressive fishing:

"They let us decommission a fleet. And all we did was we went and built new vessels more efficient, with more catching capacity, more engine power, ken what I mean. So you were taking three old boats out, okay you were only maybe putting one new one in. But it was like a super trawler. And he was catching what three boats were catching like... That's why we're having to move on to a new vessel like, because although we're making a nice living in the boat that I go on just now, nice house and car and all that kind of stuff, if I don't move on now, I'm

going to be walking out in four years time. And the fishing will have passed us by” Trawler fisherman, Fraserburgh

The evidence also indicates that changes in regulations may be affecting the inherent nature of being a fisherman, with a certain amount of deskilling and reskilling occurring. For example, regulations may be reducing the scope for fishermen to practice many of the attributes associated with being a good skipper, such as using local ecological knowledge to determine what to fish. Reskilling is occurring in the sector too, where fishermen are being required to take on electronic log books, or where onshore trades are retraining to work with salmon farms, or non-fishing businesses. Several fishermen blamed policy for pushing out valuable experienced fishermen from the industry and preventing new entrants with an enthusiasm for learning the job from entering:

“Fishermen weren’t built to work computers... you’re getting 40, 50, 60 year old some of these skippers, and you’re asking to work electronic log books... it must be really difficult for them... But it’s more experience you’re taking out of the job. Somebody that you would have maybe asked their opinion on something because he’s got 40 odd years at the job like” Prawn Skipper, Fraserburgh

As well as discouraging new entrants into the industry, there is also a perception that policy may be limiting the capacity of fishing businesses to plan for the long term, thus further undermining the sustainability of the industry. For example, some respondents perceived that regulations were often introduced without warning, meaning businesses are finding it difficult to plan for the future:

“You just don’t know what they’re going to come up with next... we ordered the new [name of boat]. I had everything counted out in place that we were going to get 237 days to fish... We were unrestricted because we didn’t catch any cod... they were offering you 85% of your track record, 5% for putting in a bigger panel, 5% for coming out of Amber areas... I went to the bank... got my bank loan, I was confident 237, okay we’re going to make this work. We left the harbour with the boat and we were down at 176 [days to fish]” Prawn skipper, Fraserburgh

Not feeling able to plan for the future is perceived to be hindering social renewal within the industry, highlighting a sense of vulnerability that people in the fishing communities feel in the face of policy decisions:

“The young guys can’t get started. They’re the guys we’re going to rely on to keep on going... We still depend on the fishing, especially in [name of coastal village] cos can’t take on oil jobs in [name of coastal village]” Harbour tradesman, Fraserburgh

Furthermore, several respondents, who either worked or had worked in the fishing industry remarked on how they were keen for their children not to enter. One reason they gave was a perceived devaluation in the image of ‘the fisherman’. Even those who still fished showed signs of actively trying to discourage their children from entering the industry. One fisherman explained that whilst his business was surviving, the weight of the “rules and regulations” he had to deal with on a daily basis, together with the “bad press” that the fishing industry has received in recent years, means he is unenthusiastic about encouraging his sons to follow him into the industry:

“I’m now, even like my younger son not to bother ken. I think the industry has gotten a wee bit destroyed... it’s just gotten more and more of a struggle and a battle against everything. Everything is thrown at you. The fun of the fishing has gone out of it. Before you used to go and hunt for fish and catch it and come in and land it. Now... it’s like a shopping list. You wonder what you’re actually allowed to go and catch and who’s going to come and pester you... All the rules and regulations, honestly... a child couldn’t dream up some of the things they throw at you... and it just gets more and more complicated” Fisherman, Shetland

Fishing families discouraging their children from entering the industry is not completely new. Several respondents described how they might have been fishermen had their parents not discouraged them when they left school. A local Fraserburgh man explained that he was from a fishing family but had never worked in the industry himself, having been told by his mother to go and get a trade when he left school. He chose to do an electrical engineering apprenticeship and has been working full-time on oilrigs ever since. However whilst the life and uncertainties that surrounds a job in fishing have always been present, and a reason in the past for some parents to discourage their children from entering the industry, now it would seem exacerbated by perceptions of overregulation of the sector and denigrations of the image and identity of fishers:

“It’s had so much bad press over the last... ten year, ken, that people’s putting other people off going to it... That to me... is a bit upsetting because I like seeing the boys at the fishing... Year after year after year, the Christmas talks start and then you hear all the scientists say “There’s no cod in the North Sea”. And then it comes on the news headlines... “Fishermen are over in Brussels talking just now and it’s been suggested that there should be a total ban on cod

fisheries ken” (sigh) How can you tell somebody to take a career move into that?” Whitefish fisherman, Shetland

“It’s not so easy to find replacements now... the younger men... they aren’t becoming involved, they aren’t going to sea to begin with. Before there would have been any amount of young men going in to try and get a job. But... because the fishing is so uncertain, there aren’t the same number. He often speaks about the fact that... they say cod’s endangered, he says “what about the endangered fishermen?” Because there’s a way of life going to be lost if they can’t encourage the young men in” Fisherman’s wife, Fraserburgh

There would appear to be multiple issues causing people to exit or avoid entering the industry. A widespread perception amongst people in the case study areas is that young people are not getting the opportunities to enter the industry any more as a result of reduced financial prospects. A prawn fisherman in Fraserburgh said that fishermen used to be envied in the local area but that it had now changed:

“There’s a lot of people... would have been very jealous of the fishermen... They were the most well-off people... with the big houses, big cars... But now... the fishermen are not so well off as what they were. There’s a lot of people just kind of laughing about it and quite happy to see the fishing going the way it’s going” Fisherman, Fraserburgh

In the Outer Hebrides respondents talked about not having opportunities within fishing anymore, with the job of a fisherman currently unable to provide an adequate income:

“It used to be that a fisherman earned substantially more than, let’s say, a council worker... 30 years ago. And now I would say a council worker’s got a much better job than a fisherman... There was an opportunity for fishermen to earn enough in three good seasons... to at least put a deposit on a house if not build a house. And now, I’d say they need to be at it for a long time. I don’t think fishermen would be able to save money now, really” Ex-fisherman, the Outer Hebrides

A fisherman on the island of Harris explained that he was trying to get out of the fishing because there was not “the money in fishing” to sustain himself. He explained that the last crew man he had, who had worked with him for three years, ended up on half the salary he started with. Others highlighted a problem of accessing sufficient finance required to start up a fishing business:

“It’s difficult because if you go in to a bank and say “I want to...get... half a million for a bank loan” the bank’ll say “Well what’s your gross going to be in the next five year...?” With



fishing you cannae say that because the government will come in with a quota cut in two years time... The government has a lot to do with it. They're encouraging guys to go out but they're nay encouraging young guys to come in" Onshore engineer, Fraserburgh

A young fisherman in North Uist said that banks now want a 50% deposit on a boat. As a result any young people who want to fish now usually have a father behind them who owns a vessel. In the class of boys taking their skipper's ticket exam in Stornoway, some held jobs in the aquaculture industry whilst others worked as crewmen on commercial fishing boats. When asked whether or not they were intending to buy boats of their own, they all replied that in the current climate they felt that buying their own boat was too much of a financial risk.

Within the communities there was evidence of people having plenty of constructive ideas to improve the management of the fishing industry. Fishing representatives spoke of having a multi-species quota and wanting to clearly define that and put it forward a positive solution for fisheries policy. A key aspiration for many revolved around the need to better communicate to the wider world and policy just what the fishermen are experiencing, and trying to get people to understand this before even thinking about what would or would not work as a policy measure:

"You were talking to these people about... the impact of their policy making on areas like Shetland and on families and communities and schools and shops. And... it astounded me that they just didn't get it...they were sitting talking about the headlines... it was all about discards... What we were trying to explain to them was that anything you do will have an impact on somebody living in the Skerries, for example" Fisheries manager, Shetland

Reinforcing notions of the 'community' is the perception within the case study areas that the Scottish fishing industry has contributed much to helping conserve stocks but that there remains a sense of persecution towards the Scots compared to other fishing nations. A major reason cited as to why Scottish fishers feel victimised concerns the large number of Scottish fishing boats that target the North Sea and West of Scotland's mixed demersal fisheries. These fisheries have historically been very heavily fished and single species conservation strategies such as the Cod Recovery Plan have made life difficult for fishers and led to high discard levels. As such, strong evidence points to notions of the fishing 'community' being mobilised through a shared sense of being acted upon by the outside world:

“I wish they would just start listening to the fishermen a bit more... Some people are blaming the leaders like and saying its [name of fisheries representative] and them, they’ve got their own agenda and that... I think they’re doing their job. But I think it’s time they just started to say “Well, no”... I just can’t see how financially we can keep taking the cuts like. And nobody’s willing or prepared to... what people have got to say like. I don’t reckon who the best person is to actually shout at. Is it the government? Is it the EU in Brussels who’s making up the rules? Is it marine leaders here in Fraserburgh?” Trawler fisherman, Fraserburgh

#### ***4.4.2 Estrangement from government science***

One of the core reasons why fisheries management rules are criticised, and a key perceived source of external threat, relates to local feelings of disconnection from the science of stock assessment. This criticism was cited frequently by respondents, despite efforts in recent years to set up and improve fisheries-science partnerships. Policy decisions are perceived as being based on fixed scientific measurements, and several respondents explained that there can be no guarantees in fishing because of the chaotic and unpredictable nature of the sea:

“We have to land 35% of prawns.... out of our total catch..... Now the problem is... I could say “Right there should be prawns in this area. It’s November, we caught prawns this time last year”. We could tow the net up that area and catch all fish. Because the prawns are not there... [where are they?] (shrugs) different reasons, there may be different tides, different climates, they’re just... not there... We’re towing a net along the bottom and trying to catch prawns but I’ve no guarantee” Prawn skipper, Fraserburgh

There was a widespread perception that scientists are trying to “measure” what is in the sea using random sampling techniques, but not taking sufficient account of local knowledge of stocks. Whether this is true or not, what is clear is that this perception persists:

“All these quota cuts are being... determined by somebody who’s sitting in a laboratory with a computer model saying “this is how many fish there are in the sea”. Now [neither] they, nor I, nor the fishermen, can say exactly how many fish there are in the sea... but if the information they put in at point A is wrong, the information they’re taking out at point B is wrong, and our industry is being cut on these premises” Fisherman’s wife, Fraserburgh

Many people involved in the fishing industry spoke about not understanding the methods of the survey boats when they came to carry out fish stock surveys. Respondents believed that the survey boats often carried out their work in areas where the respondents knew the

particular type of fish in question would not be and that their local knowledge was not feeding into the process:

“The Scotia<sup>7</sup> was... doing a whiting survey and... went to where there was no whittings... The other boat that knew the grounds and knew where the fish would be wanted to take the Scotia and see what they found there. But the Scotia wasn't interested. They didn't go there with them, ken, and the other boat did go and he got quite a good... catch of whittings” Whitefish fisherman, Shetland

This would seem to suggest at the very least that there is an ongoing problem of miscommunication and a lack of trust between the scientists and the industry, an issue that has been explored recently within fisheries social science (see Glenn et al., 2012), and a gap between local knowledge and scientific methods. It was clear that there was widespread frustration for what was perceived to be distant and flawed science concerning the state of local fish stocks that underpins fisheries management:

“There's a lot of perception that fish stocks are absolutely finite... and fully exploited, and that any future sort of fishing policy would have to focus on backing off a bit. But there's actually lots of fish stocks that aren't exploited at all” Fisheries manager, the Outer Hebrides

“If there's any more reductions... the industry will basically die a death... All the fishermen, ken, they're just so fed up with this... we're being told they're trying to help us but... all the time you're going off to sea, and cod everywhere and fish everywhere... But... the powers that be knows best. And they say that there's no fish, or the scientists or somebody is somewhere... Fishing grounds is healthy just now. This is [as] good a fishing as I've seen in 30 year but it's as little opportunity as we've had to go and catch it in 30 year” Whitefish fisherman, Shetland

A lack of confidence in the science system and feeling deeply confused about government scientific processes was something that many people in the case study areas spoke about. Concerns were expressed over the extent to which fisheries science was reliable, for example in accounting for species interaction, and that industry knowledge was not being valued in the research process. Respondents said that what they heard from the policy makers and scientists consistently did not match up with what the fishermen were seeing. An onshore business manager said “Each year the fishermen are anxiously waiting to find out what the next year's quota's going to be, how much effort they're going to be allowed... It's a big problem... that the message that the science that's being relied on flies in the face of what the industry are

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<sup>7</sup> The Scotia is a Scottish Government research vessel

reporting back”. The ‘problem’ of a breakdown in communication and understanding between the communities and government scientists is that people in the fishing industry are ‘losing heart’ in the rules:

“Every time you try to move ahead or try to get encouragement or try to see an increase in quota it’s just... “oh yeah the fishermen are saying there’s a wee bit of increase but it’s not enough to just open up the doors... And there’s going to be a wee reduction again”... It’s just so far away now from the reality of what it is ken, and once you get into that kind of mode then you just kind of stay in it ken, you lose heart in the rules” Whitefish fisherman, Shetland

Several respondents suggested that they had valuable knowledge to input into the stock assessment process, but that this was not being taken on board. They spoke of feeling marginal to the scientific process, and as a result there is a lot of collective anger directed towards government scientists and policy makers from within the communities:

“They’re dumping good quality fish [because they don’t have the quota to land what they are catching] when the scientists are saying “There’s nay fish in the sea”... I was speaking to a guy yesterday and he dumped 60 boxes of cod on his last trip... He says “I’m really struggling financially, and to see, like, 60 boxes of cod being thrown back over the side is unbelievable”” Harbour tradesman, Fraserburgh

“It’s completely gotten ridiculous with the cuts just year after year after year. The scientists tells Europe that there’s no fish in the sea... they don’t pay attention to the fisherman... we’re just treated like idiots” Whitefish fisherman, Shetland

#### ***4.4.3 Aggrieved by public views***

Respondents in the case study areas reported feeling aggrieved not only by a perceived lack of political or scientific support, but also a lack of wider public understanding of fisheries. A widespread view within the communities is that the sector is being unfairly accused of overfishing fish stocks, and that wider public views that fish stocks are dwindling, and consequent ‘headlines’ attached to that, are ill-informed and unjust. In the narratives of my respondents there was a feeling of all being in it together against the wider world (a we/they mentality) and people in the case study areas seemed keen for the positives of their lives and livelihoods to be communicated more effectively to the wider public.

The ‘environmental’ movement, which is considered by the industry to be influential in shaping public attitudes, is one locus of external threat that fishing communities highlight. In

a fish market in Shetland, several tens of boxes of enormous Grade A cod were remarked upon sarcastically by the workers as “here’s that endangered species that everyone talks about”. Many respondents described grievances with views of conservationists:

“I think that non-fishing people tend to believe a lot of the nonsense about sustainability... “oh there’s no fish”, “the seabirds are getting lesser”, “that’s because the greedy fishermen are fishing them all up”... They just do not understand that that isn’t the case... We’ve got this huge... nature conservancy lobby which is working against the fishermen... nobody wants to sustain the fish more than the fishermen and they’re never given credit for that” Fisherman’s wife, Shetland

‘Green’ NGOs and nature conservation organisations were widely felt to not understand the realities of fishing or peoples’ lives in coastal fishing communities:

“We had [name of environmental organisation] coming in a couple of year ago... they floated in front of a boat and they went to look for all the trawlers in the North Sea. And they come back into Lerwick and they come up to the Association offices and they asked where all the boats were. I said “what do you mean?” “Well there’s very few boats out there”. “That’s all there is”... “Fine” But they tied up in Lerwick and there was fracas at night of course between them and the local fishermen” Fisheries representative, Shetland

This view was expressed by respondents despite some positive partnerships between the industry and conservation interests in recent years. The Scottish Government’s Conservation Credits scheme, for example, which rewards fishermen in Scotland for best environmental practice, was devised primarily by Scottish fisheries representatives from the SFF, together with the RSPB and WWF.

The perception of unfair representation of fishing communities by ‘outsiders’ is something respondents spoke about often:

“I don’t think people truly understand it. I think the word “fisherman” is lost in some ways because there has been a lot of negativity and you know a lot of the environmental lobby has pushed you know a lot of stories and myths in some ways” Fisheries manager, Shetland

And returning to the issue of social renewal, a perceived consequence of continual unfair press was that local young people were being put off entering the sector:

“When we were young fishermen, fishermen were sort of looked up to. You were seen as having a good job, hard-working, providing for the community. Now, in lots of ways fishermen

are looked on as being rapers of the sea, throwing away good fish, greedy, and for young men to get into that, it's not very nice I don't think, and I think its uncalled for a lot of it" Fisheries liaison officer, Shetland

#### ***4.4.4 Shared feelings of 'defensiveness'***

The presentation by local communities of sources of outside interference would seem to play a part in bringing people together in fishing communities:

"It's an island community and it's a pretty close-knit community... we have a squabble among ourselves if something comes up, same as all island communities. Small communities close ranks pretty fast if you get too much outside interference (laughter)" Pelagic skipper, Shetland

It has been argued in other contexts outside of fishing that external interference has resulted in bringing people together into communities (Bell and Newby, 1971). People from the coal industry, for example, have been described as not locality-bound, but industry-bound, as a result of coming together into a 'community' through shared experiences of outside attack towards the coal sector from the wider society, media and policy.

A widespread perception amongst respondents that the fishing industry and people in coastal communities are being marginalised and threatened highlights a process of community-making at work within the case study areas based on notions of 'we' and 'they': 'we' being the local community, and 'they' being the wider world. As a fisheries representative in Shetland explained of the external view of Shetland: "When we say black it makes everyone else say white". This claim of external threat and of being the victim, helps to reinforce a community's sense of itself, around which it mobilizes resistance and an identity tied to the fishing industry:

"The Scots have always done what they had to do as regarding net sizes and mesh sizes and whatever needed to do to try and help stocks like. But we always seem to be the ones who get punished... I just feel that, if Fraseburgh was to... die a death tomorrow cos the industry collapsed, then nobody in Westminster or anywhere else would really bother too much about it" Ship Chandler, Fraserburgh

People in fishing communities are brought together by this feeling of not being listened to. Where empathy and compassion have emerged as key features that bring people together in fishing communities, the evidence suggests that feelings or projections of a lack of empathy and compassion from, or of not being heard by, the outside world can also reinforce a sense

of community. Internal empathy and connection would appear to be strengthened by a shared sense of victimization and outside attack:

“No matter what boat it is, they’re all fishermen and... you feel a compassion towards each other... when you hear that on the TV or read in the paper “don’t buy cod, it’s from the North Sea” you’d like to take folk here and say “well come and see for yourselves how hard they’re trying to look after the stocks”... They’re working with the rules they’ve been getting and yet the finger still gets pointed at them saying “You fishermen, you are destroying the environment”... They can see the harm the rules are causing but, all the rules are beyond their control... I just feel so helpless when you see what they’re trying to do” Fisherman’s wife, Shetland

A sense of ‘we’ and ‘them’ therefore reinforces compassion for each other within the fishing industry and informs a sense of ‘togetherness’, regardless of sector:

“The restrictions that they’re putting on them is really getting difficult... that boat that phoned just now... this year he is allocated one hundred and twenty days to fish for the whole year. That’s his lot. Next year it’s supposed to be another 10% cut... How can you possibly get things to work with that?... What would you do if someone said “You’re working a hundred and eight days next year and you can’t work no more”. What would you do?” Harbour electrician, Fraserburgh

The external spectres of ‘policy’, ‘science’ and ‘public’ would all therefore appear to increase the uncertainty that people in the fishing industry face such that people living and working in fishing communities in Scotland describe and promulgate a feeling of being under attack from a wider set of publics, including the larger community, scientists and national government. The perceived external threats on the one hand challenge the accumulated knowledge, experience and traditional skills that fishers customarily use as part of their business and operational strategies, undermining the very values that define the identity of a successful fisher. On the other hand they also serve to create a collective feeling of defensiveness against the outside world, reinforcing senses of ‘community’:

“Every year there’s this huge discussion... And the industry has to pick up on that and work its way through for the next year... it’s not conducive to a long-term plan because it’s a year on year thing. So you’re living hand to mouth... It all helps to rile the community to a state of defensiveness or erm, concern [because they feel they’re being attacked?] yeah [by who?] by everyone. They can trust no-one” Local authority employee, Fraserburgh

This respondent suggested that when communities feel genuinely under attack, like the fishing community in Scotland seemingly does, but they lack wider social power, a major consequence of that attack is that it puts people on the defensive:

“The main impact of fisheries policies has been to put the sector, and a powerful vocal side of the community on the defensive... So when you talk to people in these areas that are affected by fisheries issues, they start from the point of view of suspicion, of cynicism, of erm, fear, of doubt, and so anything you want to do that involves change is thereafter a huge uphill struggle”  
Local authority employee, Fraserburgh

People in the case study areas are therefore brought together through a mutual sense of feeling they need to defend themselves. Being defensive is like a strategy of resistance and community building:

“Everybody’s on the defensive... They’re defensive because of the fishing policy. They become ever more defensive each time something else happens. So this just builds up into layer upon layer. Cos they’re being told by their community leaders, their industry leaders that their community is under attack... Cod Crusaders, perfect example. Great campaigners.... you know, just rile up the community until it’s... like something out of the... movies “You’ll take away our... but you’ll no take our freedom!” you know. It really is like that. And when you get people into that state how on earth do you bring them back down to a reasoned discussion?”  
Local respondent, Fraserburgh

Questions concerning the effectiveness of local representation by fishermen organisations are something respondents alluded to often. Many felt that their views were not listened to. There is a sense of injustice that policy decisions are perceived to be made that go against the realities of the fishing industry:

“I’ve been at meetings for CFP reform and... a lot of young educated people, I mean they can talk me under the table. And they’re standing up there, giving all the answers. But I’m sorry but you really don’t know what you’re speaking about. How do we get that message across? And that’s one thing we’re very bad at as an industry is getting the message out. I don’t know exactly how we do it but I mean nearly everyone that spoke at that conference, there was over 300 delegates... and very few of them were people who were directly.. at the sharp end of the industry” Fisheries representative, Shetland

“You can only put your point across to [name of fisheries representative] and they can only write it down or whatever... And they can only put your point across. But this is why I said to you why I stopped going to meetings, because... you were saying “This is what I would like”



and “Why can’t we do this?” And you’ve got all these fishermen all saying the same... And then everything you asked for, you never ever got... and it was like, what’s the point in going like?” (Trawler fisherman, Fraserburgh)

This raises questions surrounding representation, an issue that is discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7. It must be difficult for fisheries organisations such as the SFF to represent such a diverse industry. One response may have been to focus on external, rather than internal, issues and adopt an overarching focus on resistance. The evidence in this research suggests that regardless of existing strategies, there is a need to consider future internal and external approaches to communication.

In summary, the closing of ranks by people in fishing communities is informed by widely held local perceptions that fisheries science and policy lacks local specificity, is eroding fundamental flexibilities and undervaluing local knowledge and skills. Feeling powerless and marginalised emerges as an overriding sentiment in fishing communities which also serves to bring people together. Reflecting on this in the context of community-making highlights the possibility that a key feature of ‘community’ is the act of identifying and, to some extent, perpetuating notions of external threat, as a way of asserting the self, such that policy, science and the public are factors mobilized in creating the ‘fishing community’. The evidence also suggests that there are genuine ongoing failures of communication between people in fishing communities and people making policy decisions or carrying out the science.

#### **4.5 Summary**

In summary, the analysis set out in this chapter has highlighted the multiplicity of understandings of the fishing ‘community’ informed by the ways people in the three case study areas are thinking and feeling about their lives and their situation. To begin with, feelings of connection extend the occupational-based fishing ‘community’ around the Scottish coastline and beyond. However they also inform place-based fishing communities. As such the findings expand on place- and occupation-based definitions of fishing ‘community’ to include collective senses of empathy with one another. Feelings of attachment to others include shared grief and empathy for people lost to the sea, and positive fishing identities. People spoke of an intrinsic value attached to working in the fishing industry, of loving their jobs and not wanting to do anything else. This exposes the limits to which fisheries

‘dependency’ can be understood solely in economic terms. The intensity of attachment to fishing as a positive identity then emerges as an important aspect of fisheries ‘dependency’ and the reason why many fishing businesses feel that alternative forms of employment are difficult to access.

This chapter has also unearthed a problem of disconnect with policy, science and the wider public that people in fishing communities have. Sets of shared meanings that create aspects of ‘us’ and ‘them’ illuminate a problem of trust within the communities that is exacerbated by a shared sense of defensiveness against the outside world. Collectively people in the case study areas feel under attack from fisheries management and the wider public. However the extent to which communities frame themselves in relation to external threats highlights a role that these threats play in bringing people together into a ‘community’. How people in fishing communities are dealing with this situation and moving forward is discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 5. Inherent contradictions within communities**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous two chapters have examined the everyday routines and thoughts and feelings of people living and working within the fishing industry and in the surrounding territorial community in Scotland. This chapter explores how the routines and the imagined 'communities of the mind' can bring people together, but also stand people apart. In doing so, it brings attention to inherent contradictions that exist within and between fishing 'communities', how difference and marginalisation can occur across them (Liepins, 2000b), and how this renders one simple understanding of the fishing 'community' defunct. This chapter, then, evidences the diversity, complexity and difference inherent in understandings of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community', ideas that may need to be brought out and embraced positively by policy.

This chapter considers how the fishing 'community' in Scotland is characterised by diversity and difference, as well as by fisheries. It also explores notions of fisheries 'dependency' further. So far, the data have shown how fisheries 'dependency' includes a deep emotional attachment to a way of life that is characterised by autonomy, freedom and risk, both for those who fish (see section 4.3), and also for people in the wider community (see section 4.2). Fishermen are well versed businessmen, and in many ways perceive themselves as not dependent on anyone. They are massively independent and self-reliant (see section 3.3), as is the wider community as a whole (see section 3.5). There remains a strong sense of an affiliation with, and 'dependency' on, fishing, even amongst many people who may not be in direct contact with the industry. At the same time, in Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland there are feelings of 'togetherness' that extend beyond the fishing industry and which point to wider senses of the community at work. This chapter begins by exploring the various 'community' processes at work beyond that of belonging to the fishing industry.

Notions of 'we' and 'they' are then discussed. These have been highlighted already in Chapter 4 and referred to in the literature as key components in 'community'-making and in the processes that bring people together (Crow and Allan, 1994; Elias and Scotson, 1994; Cohen, 1985). This chapter examines the different dimensions and groups of 'we' and 'they'

within the communities in detail and, in doing so, illuminates the fluidity of the communities in Scotland and the multiple layers at which they operate.

Finally, having established how the fishing industry is set within diverse and mixed communities, the chapter discusses the impact of multiple ‘communities’ on local development. It looks at how different people, places and sectors are regarding their futures, concerning both the territorial community and also the fishing industry. In doing so, it highlights an on-going process of constructing, imagining and narrating a past, a present and a future within the fishing industry and within the case study areas that are different for different people, places, and sectors. By exploring contrasting aspirations for development the chapter highlights the inconsistent timescales and irrevocable contradictions within the fishing ‘communities’.

## **5.2 Multiple and dynamic ‘communities’**

The daily routines and shared communities of the mind of the respondents suggest that there are different interpretations of the fishing ‘community’ at work in Scotland, that are embedded within a wider territorial community, but also not (see Chapters 3 and 4). This section explores the way in which the fishing ‘community’ and the wider territorial community are interwoven, and the complex local populations that exist within them. There is not one identity existing within fishing communities, but many. Territorial fishing communities are made up of more than just ‘fishing’ and are far from being homogeneous. Community identities extend beyond fishing, although there is still an interest and focus on fisheries. The following sub-section looks at the diverse mix of people and occupations in the territorial communities and discusses the contradiction that fishing is an important source to many despite diverse local economies. It also looks at the extent to which this diversity of local economies is heightening or weakening senses of ‘community’.

### ***5.2.1 A diverse mix of people and occupations***

In each of the three case study areas there are specific geographic locations that in the past had a high proportion of its working population involved in the fishing industry. In the Outer Hebrides, the islands of Barra, Eriskay, Grimsay, Scalpay and a few other areas along the eastern shores of Uist, Harris and Lewis have historically had a high percentage of its population involved in fishing. In Shetland, the islands of Burra, Whalsay and the Skerries, as

well as the 'mainland' towns of Scalloway and Lerwick have had, and still have, a high proportion of people involved in the fishing industry. Whilst in some cases there is still a large proportion of the local working population involved in fishing, for example in the town of Fraserburgh and its surrounding coastal villages, the proportion of people working in the fishing industry in the past generally was much higher than the number that work in it today. It is clear that there are now dynamic and changing populations in what were once traditional fishing communities. Many people living in these areas today are from a range of backgrounds and hold a diversity of jobs beyond fishing. On the island of Whalsay, which has a history steeped in fishing, several respondents perceived that council and care work related jobs are responsible for keeping the island going, and that there is as much of a dependency on non-fishing jobs in Whalsay now as there is on fishing.

"We've seen an increase in folk coming from... south and from the mainland of Shetland. There's... some folk that have gone away, studied and come back. They're maybe... in to a different industry, 'commuters'... There's those that have retired... There's a fellow over here, he's an accountant... A couple of ladies over here that work at... the care centre" Fisherman's wife, Whalsay, Shetland

Similarly on Burra, an island that has traditionally been populated by fishing families, interviewees highlighted how those who work in the fishing industry now are far outnumbered by those who do not:

"The house down here, he's a builder... Down here are two school teachers. The next one... he was an architect. The next one works at Sullom. The next one works to the council... he's a plumber. The next one on this side... they're both retired... The majority were born here. The house across from here... he used to work in BP... his wife is a teacher... The chap that lives down here is French. He's a French teacher" Fisherman's wife, Burra, Shetland

Throughout Shetland many respondents conveyed the view that whilst the fishing industry is fundamental to the islands, with fishing families embedded into the islands' history, the majority of people that live in Shetland now are not involved in fishing:

"There's a lot of service work, a lot of ferries and schools... Education's a big employer in the islands. But we have a lot of 'travelling' people that go into Lerwick to work every day and come back again" Haulage operator, fishing village, Shetland

So the case study areas are populated by a mixture of people, both who fish and who do not, and who have diverse backgrounds and interests within, but also outside of, the fishing

industry. A local resident in Burra who worked in the fishing industry said that most of the people he went to school with were not fishermen, and many of his friends were not from Burra:

“We have friends... that’s nothing to do with fishing... My pals that I grew up with... one’s an engineer and one’s a plumber; one works for the power station... one of them’s from Hamnavoe, the other one I met when we were in Scalloway” Fisherman, Burra, Shetland

Similarly in the Fraserburgh area, a pelagic fisherman said he felt no difference to those in his local territorial community who did not fish:

“There’s not a “fishing community”, and we’re “the fishing community” and you’re “somebody else”. I mean if you know other people, and the people are doing different occupations, you still remain friends” Pelagic fisherman, Fraserburgh

Those who worked outside of the fishing industry conveyed a similar story. Whilst many non-fishing respondents spoke of coming from fishing families originally, there is a sense for many that there are far more activities outside of fishing for one to be involved with now and that gives people a sense of themselves and their culture away from fishing. One respondent in Lerwick explained that although his grandparents had been fishers, a job in fishing had never even occurred to him:

“I don’t think that it ever occurred to me for one second to go into fishing... it didn’t appear to me to be something that I would have been good at... There were dozens of types of activity that people might be doing... working on the roads... working for the local authorities... working at hospitals... it was very very varied” Lerwegian, Shetland

Whilst the majority of respondents spoke of having grandparents who had worked directly in fishing, people demonstrated different stages of having left the industry. Some described having never started in the industry in the first place, with their parents having made the break.

“When I was a youngster... my father would fish and just go out for the day on a smaller boat. But ... my grandfather retired quite young and then nobody took the boat on... none of the family were interested... He’d an older son who died young... his younger son was a boat builder so he obviously wasn’t interested... If... there hadn’t been a gap it’s quite likely I could have ended up as a fisherman. But I didn’t” Local resident, Fraserburgh

There is clearly also a range of activities that serve to bring people together that extend well beyond fishing and the sea. In Fraserburgh interviewees spoke about the Rotary Club and church fetes. In Shetland many of the local community events that people spoke about revolved around sport and music. Even on the island of Whalsay, respondents described the golf, the football team, the leisure centre and the sailing events - as opposed to fishing - as the main activities that brought people into contact with their neighbours and friends. So it is clear that senses of togetherness and 'community' are not solely tied to a fishing occupation. There are different community narratives, about what makes up the 'community', with fishing being only one of many facets that are highlighted.

### ***5.2.2 'Fitting in' and 'settling'***

One dominant narrative of the 'community' in the case study areas concerns 'fitting in' and 'settling' (see ideas about 'contribution', and notions of self-sufficiency and reciprocity in section 3.5). In some instances respondents said that one has to be born in a place to hold a particular identity tied to that place (see being a 'Brocher' in section 2.6.1). However, in the majority of cases, respondents emphasised that one does not have to be born in a place to be a part of that community. As a result, there is not one sense of belonging, but lots of different senses of belonging, challenging the view that there is one dominant sense of belonging in a fishing community.

The ability to fit in and get along with one another is now a key feature of being a part of the 'community' in the case study areas, which goes far beyond the issue of fishing:

"I think people are defining you by how actually you behave within the community... There's a couple who are Shetland who moved up from Lerwick... I would say they're seen more as 'incomers' than I am because they don't do anything. They don't mix... They're seen as... 'outsiders' because of that... There are quite a few people that I would say are categorised in that way" Fisheries representative originally from Scottish mainland

A large proportion of the people in the case study areas now have moved in from elsewhere. For example, in the Outer Hebrides a respondent explained how the local businesses in his village were run mostly by incomers: the chef of the local restaurant was a Spaniard, the owner of the restaurant was from Kent, the local hostel was owned by someone from Plymouth, and the post office and local shop were run by people from Edinburgh. In Shetland a retired fisherman explained that most of his neighbours and friends that he had known for several decades were not from Shetland originally:

“The neighbourhood that I’m in... most of them are “sooth moothers” [people not born in Shetland but who have come in through the ‘south mouth’ of the harbour]... But the people that are there are not... what I would call ‘retired incomers’. They all came here a long time ago... Most of them worked for the council... or the government, or SEPA, customs and excise” Ex-fisherman, Shetland

Those who get involved in the community, buy houses and have children are considered to have settled in well to the communities, regardless of whether or not they have been born in the area. And there is evidence also to suggest that a mix of ‘locals’ and ‘incomers’ is *not* hindering senses of ‘togetherness’:

“The Shetland community is... a very loose and mixed community at times... There’s not a big differentiation between an ‘incomer’ being from somewhere else in Shetland, or from somewhere else in the UK, or from somewhere else in the world for that matter” Local resident, Whiteness, Shetland

Respondents in both the Outer Hebrides and Shetland said explicitly that people moving into an area are valued for keeping the local populations going, and for enriching the community:

“A more diverse community is helpful to us all... We can sit here in our own bubble, can’t we and... not realise there’s a bigger world out there... It does the children good to hear from other families that lived in other places and from different backgrounds” Fisherman’s wife, Whalsay, Shetland

“You need people... to run the island. So you can’t turn your back on anybody willing to come here sort of thing because you’ve got to keep the population buoyant” Fisherman, Barra, the Outer Hebrides

However, whilst largely there was considered to be no social separation between ‘locals’ and ‘incomers’, it is clear that ‘settling’ in provides a route to ‘we’, whilst remaining temporary keeps people as ‘they’. ‘Travelling’ people, or commuters, are perceived to occupy a large proportion of the working population now in Shetland. One respondent described how in the village in which he lived there was now a definite ‘group’ of people who “go to the town [Lerwick] to work, come home, go to the town to socialise, their children go to the town to school rather than going to the local school”. And for some respondents there is a sense that ‘community’ bonds have eroded over time, with less interactions:

“The main thing is the interaction between people. It’s just not there in the way it was previously. People were in and out of each other’s houses all the time... especially the men...



Much more community-spirited... That's gone to a large extent" Fish processor, North Uist, the Outer Hebrides

So within the same case study areas there are both heightened and a weakened senses of 'community'.

Settling in would appear to be important for informing senses of 'we' within the fishing industry also:

"There's a couple of Poles and stuff like that within the community... there's a few come to do seasonal work in the fish factory... Because they're only seasonal you don't know if they'll be back the next year so you don't really consider them a part of the community... They're just renting, and you don't know if it'll be the same one the next year or not" Creel fisherman, Barra, the Outer Hebrides

In this way, narratives of the territorial community infuse the fishing industry and vice versa. There were established fishermen in the Outer Hebrides, for example, who were not from the islands originally. However because they had been fishing on the islands for over 20 years they felt very much a part of the community. One of them explained that people in his area of the Outer Hebrides are judged on what they do and whether or not they have children, more than where they are from:

"I find that people are judged on what they do and on if they've got kids, which we did... you know, it's just, people are people everywhere. If they can find something to relate to, your work, your children, your pets, whatever, then you make friends... if you're just doing the same thing as everybody else" Fisherman, the Outer Hebrides

Another fisherman in Shetland explained how he saw the difference between a 'local' and an 'incomer' as whether or not someone married in to the local community or not:

"[All Whalsay people on your boat?] Yeah, yeah. Well they all stay in Whalsay (laughter) We've got one from London. He's the cook. But he's been married... stayed here 40, 30-odd year... Somebody from here marrying somebody from outside and them moving in, I wouldn't class them as an 'incomer'... It's more the whole family moving in, taking over the house" Fisherman, Shetland

So an 'incomer', in the sense that they are not originally from the local area, can be part of the local community if they arrive, fit in and settle. Adopting the local language or dialect would appear to be another characteristic of assimilation into the community:

“We have guys that work here from the Eastern Bloc... We launched a boat a couple of months ago and one of the guys and his bairns had to launch it... And I mean he speaks reasonably good English but it’s with a very heavy Polish accent. And his children were speaking broad Shetland... they weren’t born here... one of them had started school in Poland but the other two started school here” Onshore business manager, Shetland

In other examples, a pelagic factory in the Fraserburgh area employed two Filipino quality controllers, both of whom spoke English in the local north east dialect. Again this links to findings from Chapter 3 (section 3.3) and the role of dialect in creating the fishing ‘community’.

### **5.2.3 ‘Communities’ in flux**

As well as there being a mixture of backgrounds and professions, there is a strong sense locally that local populations are in a constant state of change, with people leaving and moving in all the time. One of the community narratives found in the research is that the case study areas are ‘communities of change’. Changes characterise the communities and the people within them, emphasising the fluid nature of the communities, contradicting static notions of ‘fishing communities’, and challenging the view that these communities are homogeneous or unchanging.

Migration, or the flow of people into and out of places, has an effect on a community’s sense of change. One respondent in Shetland said that there is “always a turnover of people in the community”, and this was conveyed many times over by people in Fraserburgh and the Outer Hebrides as well, with people “leaving” being a key characteristic of the communities:

“I’m the only one that was really staying here out of the five of us... [my wife’s] got three sisters on the mainland and a brother on the mainland” Creel fisherman, Barra, the Outer Hebrides

So flows of people into and out of an area are a community narrative, just like ‘settling in’ and ‘fitting in’ is. However, there would appear to be a mixture of feelings locally regarding the out-migration of young people in the case study areas with the out-migration of young people a key concern for those left behind. For those who work in the fishing industry especially, there is a widespread perception that young people are increasingly choosing not to pursue a career on the islands, or in the fishing industry, because of having more attractive opportunities now not only in other trades and sea-faring industries, but also on the mainland

(see section 3.4.3). The pull of university also attracts people away from both fishing and the case study areas in general. Many respondents described how it is increasingly common for young people to leave for university, work away for a number of years, and then come back in their 30s or 40s to settle. One respondent in Shetland explained that her daughter had left when she was young to live in England for a number of years, married and started a family there. However now she was in the process of building a family home back in Shetland with the intention of moving her family back to the islands when it was finished. So as well as a perception of there being both inward and outward migration in the case study areas, there is also a perceived pattern of people leaving when young to work away, but returning to settle eventually. This pattern was reflected by people in the Outer Hebrides also:

“My sister went away and was away for quite a while but she’s now back... They quite often come back when they were older” Fish processor, Uist, the Outer Hebrides

Another strong community narrative is that the communities are aging, and this came across from people involved in the fishing industry in particular. A common perception amongst respondents in the fishing industry is that the number of retirees moving in to the area is outnumbering the number who move in to work. One fisherman in Harris, whose grandfather had been a crofter-fisherman to sustain his family, said that of 25 people that lived in his local village, only eight were of working age. The rest were 60 or older and retired. There were just two children in the village and they were both his. A creel fisherman in another part of the Outer Hebrides reiterated this view, saying “The place is becoming quite a retirement centre. There’s very few people move here who are of working age”. And people in Shetland and Fraserburgh also expressed concern about how youth and activity has diminished:

“Before it was a young community and every household was thriving and kids was out playing... There was always people coming and going ken, and the post office was there... But now it’s become... a very very old community... the kids moved on... we got scattered around” Whitefish fisherman, Shetland

However, whilst these respondents from the fishing industry felt that the Shetland communities were becoming ‘old’, there were other views that contradicted this, particularly from those who were not from the islands originally. An alternative community narrative in Shetland is that it is mostly people of working age that are moving into Shetland, and that Shetland is ‘coming on’, improving and growing:

“You’re always going to get some people that will go... to university. Although in [name of village] it strikes me that there’s a lot of people trying to come and... find jobs... A lot of people are having to travel to Lerwick every day... in order to be employed... the hotel’s come on leaps and bounds, the shop’s opened, and there’s another two little businesses opened” Local resident originally from mainland Scotland, Shetland

So as well as there being an anticipation of ‘decline’ in the communities, there is also a sense of ‘buoyancy’. In this way there are both favourable and less favourable views contradicting each other, with the positive views seemingly coming predominantly from those not directly involved with the fishing industry. Some lean towards a feeling that the community is in decline, or ‘weakening’, whilst others revolve around a sense of a stronger community. Often a sense of a ‘weakening’ of the ‘community’ is associated as coming from those involved in the fishing industry. This suggests there is some transposing of the view of overall demise of the industry on to wider understandings of the ‘community’ and ‘place’.

Comparing differences between the case study areas, however, it is clear that views from Shetland tend to be relatively optimistic in relation to predominantly negative views held in the Outer Hebrides and Fraserburgh of the local populations shrinking and aging. This suggests that an important feature to come out of interpretations of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ is the self-images of places. Whether or not these are borne out by statistics, they are key components of the narratives that people in these places are constructing about themselves, and thus important for understanding communities.

In summary, the fishing industry in Scotland today is set within diverse local economies, made up of people with multiple ties to each other. Those areas that have traditionally been regarded as ‘fishing communities’ now have mixed and dynamic populations. What is significant about these dynamic populations in the three case study areas is that they highlight the different processes of identifying similarities and differences to others, or notions of ‘we’ and ‘they’, that currently inform senses of the fishing ‘community’ in Scotland. It is evident that only a small percentage of the working population in the case study areas now is involved directly in the fishing sector. However whilst many people work in other occupations or have now moved away from the fishing industry, there is still attention on fishing, and fishing would appear to stand out, be distinctive and be important to many people out with the industry; fishing has significance for many despite other sources of community cohesion. Many people living and working in these places feel united through the

experience of being in a place that has a history tied to fishing. They are seen as ‘fishing communities’ by many local residents, both fishing and non-fishing alike.

This section has shown that as well as communities being in flux in the case study areas, so are peoples’ views of their communities, and there are contrasting views not only between the different case study areas, but also within individual cases. Also, just as the wider territorial community is in a state of flux, so too is the fishing industry. As well as different views regarding the ‘buoyancy’ and ‘decline’ of the community that go some way to standing apart those within the fishing from those not working in the fishing industry, there are also differing views within the fishing industry itself. Divisions within the sector are discussed in more detail in the next section.

### **5.3 Fissures within the fishing industry**

In earlier chapters, the way in which people view the fishing industry, and conceptions of the fishing ‘community’, may seem to present a homogeneous view of the industry. However, the reality is that there are many fissures and internal contradictions within the fishing industry. This section discusses the various points of fissure within the fishing industry itself to include perceived divisions between foreign workers and Scottish people, perceived divisions between the east coast and the west coast, perceived differences between large scale and small scale boats, and perceptions of differences between an inshore versus an offshore industry. In doing so, it challenges the idea that the fishing industry in Scotland is homogeneous. Rather, there are other important sources of self- and collective- identity at work that inform different understandings of the fishing ‘community’.

#### ***5.3.1 The employment of foreign nationals***

Many research participants spoke about how, in the past, the majority of people working in the fishing industry in Scotland were locally born and bred, whereas now, they are not just from a wider catchment area in Scotland, but are also from different countries. This challenges the stereotypical view of fishing communities as being made up of local Scottish families, and kin-based networks. Foreign nationals and their descendants are now a key part of the fishing community in Scotland. For example, in Fraserburgh many of the people working in the industry are not from the town originally, including a large number of Eastern European and Russian migrants who work in the fish processing factories. There are many

Polish families who have moved to Fraserburgh as a result of husbands or partners securing jobs in the fishing industry (see section 3.3.2) and instances of Eastern European or Russian migrant workers from the fish processing factories marrying people from local fishing families. So there are both settled and transient non-nationals in the communities.

Many interviewees highlighted the importance that non-nationals have played in sustaining the fishing industry in Scotland, both within the catching sector and also within onshore fishing businesses:

“Nobody wants to do these processing jobs nowadays, that’s why we’ve had to attract... people from overseas to do it... If it were not for that we wouldn’t have an industry” Local authority employee, Fraserburgh

“They’re all using foreign labour now... all the fish farms and everything else. It isn’t enough money for the locals... For the ones that might be good it isn’t enough money for them and for the others they’re unemployable for almost any work at all... I’ve seen them coming in here and sitting at the table and crying their eyes out and people disappearing to the toilet and not coming out for hours. You had all sorts... So it was just bite the bullet and get some people from... an agency” Fish processor, Uist, the Outer Hebrides

This latter interviewee explained that he staffed his factory with “Latvians and Poles”, and described them as “very loyal, good workers”. He said that local workers in general were being replaced by foreigners because there was “a lack of reliability amongst local people”. He explained that his foreign workers had a “totally different work ethic” to what he had found in local people, saying “they would work away all day and they were really conscientious and there were no problems like not turning up for work or anything like that”.

However, there are also perceived consequences of the industry becoming increasingly populated by non-nationals, relating to a change in relationships and social networks. Within the catching sector, crews in the past were composed predominantly of locally born and resident men. In Fraserburgh, crews are now typically composed of a local skipper and perhaps one other local member, with the rest of the crew being non-nationals. Non-nationals were described by skippers as being cheaper and more reliable, in the face of increasing financial difficulties and problems securing good local fishermen:

“Everybody is under a lot of pressures, ken...you couldn’t afford to come down to your boat on a Sunday night, and you were going away to sail and for this Fraserburgh lad nay to turn up. Or that lad to be drunk or this lad to be on drugs. And when you employed the foreigners you had,

well you've a ten to twelve month contract so you knew... what you're paying every month, ken, so you've that structure already... You come down on a Sunday night. They were keen, they were ready to sail, they were right as happy... so it was just easier if you want to put it that way" Prawn Skipper, Fraserburgh

However, this interviewee also highlighted some of the social consequences of these changes in crew structures, such as increasing feelings of isolation amongst skippers:

"[With local crew] if you get a really good trip or something, like, and you're on a high and a buzz and you got good prices, you would take the lads and, "hey I'll buy yous a pint before you go home"... And they would wait in the pub 'til you went up and squared up and all the rest of it and you would come back to the pub with their wages and everybody was happy ... But now, no. You don't get that any more... You are isolated now, cos now you just come in and you land... If it's time for foreigners' wages at the end of the month you'll pick them up, you'll give them their wages then just say "boys we'll send you a text when we're sailing again". And that's it." Prawn skipper, Fraserburgh

Changes in crew structures are perhaps indicative of a wider set of changes at play in social relationships. There were suggestions that the close interpersonal relationships and the culture of reciprocity are being undermined by the contraction of the industry, with those most committed surviving but at the expense of safety and traditional crew structures. There was evidence to suggest a growing 'dog-eat-dog' attitude amongst skippers, with people making decisions increasingly for themselves and/or blood-relations rather than the wider community. Those still in the industry felt they were often more focused on increasing catching capacity, access to quota, the cheapest labour, and to taking more risks out at sea in order to make their businesses survive.

In contrast, in Shetland it would seem that many new entrants into the industry continue to be local to the islands, and there are very few non-nationals employed in the industry. A fisheries representative suggested that there are three to four Ghanaians and three to four Filipinos working full-time in the whole of the Shetland catching sector, which employs 300 full time fishermen and 150 part-time. This highlights how perceptions within the communities of the employment of foreign nationals differ.

However, there is evidence that people working within the Scottish fishing industry unite when faced with fishing fleets from other countries. For example, friction with non-Scottish

fleets is something many respondents referred to, with ‘we’ being local Scottish boats and ‘they’ being foreign boats:

“The Spanish have a big fleet of boats fishing in our waters. Big boats, not small boats like what we’ve got. And... probably nothing of that stays in this country. The fish, all the repairs, goes back home. Now, I would chuck them out [laughter] chuck ‘em out! Keep the boys at home... The thing about them, they’re in here legally right because they’ve probably bought fishing rights, bought fishing quotas. So they’re probably fishing legal. How legal they’re fishing, I don’t know, cos our boys are pretty hard policed. Every time they come to the market they’ve got to log in, tell them what they’ve got... That boys don’t, it goes home. So I’ve a funny feeling that the policing side’s pretty lax on their part. And that’s nay fair” Harbour tradesman, Fraserburgh

As well as the employment of foreign nationals and a contracting industry affecting traditional social structures within the industry, it would also seem that location and sector play a role in highlighting internal differences within the fishing community. This is discussed further in the next section.

### ***5.3.2 Perceived differences between ‘place’ and ‘sector’***

In identifying similarities and differences to others, feelings of connection can be demarcated along lines of place or sector. For example, those same respondents who spoke about a broad connection between people from fishing communities in Chapter 4 (section 4.2) also highlighted feelings of disconnection between the east coast and west coast and, moving down the scale, disconnection between different sectors, and also different jobs, within the fishing industry.

A harbour electrician in Fraserburgh, for example, explained that he did not feel a strong connection with the west coast, because in his line of work he dealt mostly with the large boats, the majority of which are situated in the east:

“Home boats will phone... and maybe some of them further down the coast... but... the west coast, it tends to be little boats. You will get someone maybe phoning with something but the majority of the fleet is this corner” Harbour electrician, Fraserburgh

In the Outer Hebrides, those who spoke Gaelic and/or shared a Celtic heritage described feeling close to people from the west side of the UK generally, but dissimilar to people from the east coast, regardless of whether or not they fished. One interviewee in the Outer



Hebrides explained that whilst he had some sympathy for the east coast fishing industry, he felt that the west coast was totally different:

“I don’t like to moan about [the east coast fishermen]... because they’re good at what they do... But I feel that they have more opportunity to be like that about it than we do... There isn’t a ready market here because of lack of people... All the time you’ve got the cost of getting things away... If I tried to do something here... I have to start with trying to get all the facilities to do it... If you were fishing from Fraserburgh you’ve all your life had a pier. You just go to a fishery agent, he’ll sell all your product... But here it was totally different... There’s a failure to grasp the difficulties of trying to do things from these more remote areas... I think... by government” Ex-fisherman, North Uist, the Outer Hebrides

There is also a sense locally of policy opening up inequalities between fishing communities, a theme that was discussed in section 4.4. People in the Outer Hebrides described feeling overlooked or ignored compared to other fishing areas in Scotland. A creel fisherman in Barra said “It’s good that you’ve travelled this far to find out the differences here and how we’re affected”. Other fishermen and people working in the fishing industry in the Outer Hebrides conveyed a sense of abandonment:

“The government’s got it all wrong this, they’re not helping the west coast... West coast is an inshore fleet and you fish the west coast different to the east coast... There’s a big difference between offshore 20-odd metre boats... Our boats here are, the biggest would be 18 metres... And all the quota is on the east coast. There’s nothing on the west coast” Fish processor, the Outer Hebrides

Notions of the fishing ‘community’, then, can be tied to a particular place, just as readily as not. A commonality between Shetland and Fraserburgh is that the crews on the boats are now sourced from a broader catchment area than in the past:

“The crews of boats now come from all over Shetland... A good example is the [name of local whitefish trawler] where you’ve got fishermen from Burra, from Skerries, from Whalsay, from different parts of Shetland all crewing their boat... In my dad’s day, not only was it all fishermen from Burra but the guys who had a boat, it would be two brothers and two first cousins. It would be a close kinship, ownership of the boat. All of that’s gone, and you just get six guys now who are interested in fishing” Retired fisherman, Burra, Shetland

However, there remain differences between the crewing of boats in Fraserburgh and Shetland, revealing how communities and places see themselves as standing apart along lines

of collective working ethic that is reflected in ownership structures. In Shetland there has been a shift from family-run boats to groups of local men co-owning a boat:

“In Fraserburgh there’s probably one man... that owns the boat, ken and he can let his son take it over when he steps out cos it’s just one man that’s involved... he just fishes, then his son goes to sea with him, then he just learns his son up, and then his son takes over and the father steps ashore ken. But when you’ve got four completely different shareholders, ken... it’s not like a family. I mean, my other three shareholders... they’re not family at all, they’re just people I know ken that we’re in partnership with” Whitefish skipper, Shetland

It would seem that a determination to work together in Shetland speaks of an inherent vulnerability felt by people who live and work there that they have no choice but to get along, reflecting a wider culture of mutual dependence as described in section 3.5. The evidence presented in Chapter 3 suggests that in Shetland people do not try to “get one over” on one another because they are geographically isolated and so it is important that they work together:

“Historically we’ve had the ownership of the boats... like when I bought my boat... if I wanted a good crew - the way to keep a good crew was get them in as owners. So we all worked together” Retired fisherman, Shetland

A spirit of working collectively, characteristic of Shetland, would appear to be a source of pride amongst local people, with one respondent making a direct comparison with how that attitude in Shetland compared to what he perceived as a much more individualistic attitude in Fraserburgh:

“[A Scottish Government policy officer] was up here looking at the PO, and he says... “I really like the way that you’ve done things in Shetland... Why is there such a difference between you and other areas?” and I said “One of the differences... is I drive a nine-year old Peugeot estate. Some of the others drive Porches”... There’s a lot of that in Peterhead and Fraserburgh, where the skipper has this great big house, a great big car and god knows what else... Here... the crew all get the same pay... All the time I was at the fishing... the only way I got any extra was if I owned the boat. Then I had a boat share. But then I had other owners to share that with, so the money was spread around... There you get, very often... some guy going... hard to sea for a few years, getting the business under way, then basically sit ashore, put someone else in control and dare I say it, hiring a number of incoming workers at a very cheap rate, and making an awful lot of money individually” Ex-fisherman, Shetland

Moving down a scale of comparing similarities and differences to others in understanding notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’, there are not only perceived differences *between* fisheries areas, but also *within* the case study areas. One fisherman in the north east revealed that even within the Fraserburgh area itself there were active notions of ‘we’ and ‘they’ at play:

“It was sometimes better if you’d guys from Banff because they’d have been brought up the way you were brought up... Coming to Fraserburgh... some guys... been used to drink and stuff like that... The guys from Gardenstown seemed to be focused on marriage and family. So when we were looking for a guy... trying to suss out a wee bit... if this is a guy that’s married and has family, this is not a guy that you’re going to go down on a Sunday night and he’s excessively full of drink and not going to turn up... So, gave you... like a structure” Trawler skipper, Fraserburgh

In the Outer Hebrides also there was a sense of inequality between different fishing locations within the archipelago:

“[How would you describe the trawler fleet here [in Stornoway]?] Ancient... I don’t know... why folk haven’t reinvested in their vessels... or taken the opportunity when times were better to change their vessel... But in Barra, I mean that’s a good comparison... Folk in Barra took the opportunity to invest... They said “We’re not going to continue if we just carry on like this”. And at that time the fisheries loan scheme was in existence... they identified it as more of an opportunity” Local Authority employee, Stornoway, the Outer Hebrides

A sense of difference along lines of place is often a reflection of sector divides. East-West is a broad example of this. There is also evidence of conflict (or difference in prosperity or opportunities available) between sectors. In discussing the usefulness of environmental labelling, for example, fishermen highlighted huge differences between fleet segments and sectors. For example, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) accreditation, an international ‘sustainability’ scheme for fisheries, was reported to have brought benefits to the pelagic sector of the Scottish fishing industry:

“The MSC...what it’s done is... the factories in the UK weren’t big enough to take all the quota... So some of us had to go to Norway... But what the Norwegians did was... because they were slightly ahead of us with the quality of the product and the marketing skills... they started selling to Japan... And everything that came out of Norway was... “Norwegian fish”... We were saying “Look, its Scottish fish unloaded in Norway”. “No its Norwegian fish”... What the MSC’s exposed is... if a Scottish ship unloads in Norway, they have to put “Produce of

Scotland, produced in Norway”... So as far as that goes its really done us good” Pelagic skipper, Fraserburgh

However, within the inshore sector in the Outer Hebrides the MSC was reported as having not helped at all:

“We went through that responsible fishing scheme... the MSC one, aye. I can’t say it’s helped us one little bit. We’re still landed to the same vivier lorry and getting the same prices... It’s an extra survey you have to go through... you know, keeping another few in a job but not me [laughter]” Creel fisherman, Barra, the Outer Hebrides

In other examples of internal delimitation of fishing communities along lines of sector, one respondent in Fraserburgh, who serviced the trawler boats on the east coast, described the pelagic fleet as “totally different” and said that it “wouldn’t matter if they were gone tomorrow for us. It would have no impact” because “what they’ve done... they employ a qualified sparkie [not a harbour tradesman]... qualified engineers which they work aboard the boat. So they are not taking work... here [within the harbour trades] whatsoever”. On the west coast too there was evidence of fissures between different sectors. There is conflict within the Outer Hebrides not only between static boats and mobile ones, but within the creel sector itself, between small and large creel boats. A creel fisherman in Barra described how “super-crabbers” were not liked in the Outer Hebrides because they “plundered the stocks”:

“I would like to see some... limits coming in as to definitely pot numbers. It would just stop the one or two that abuse things... You might get a nomadic boat that has quite a lot of pots and they would move into an area... There’s crabbers from the south of England which have hardly ever been to England they’ve always fished from Scotland, which is fair enough if they want to stay within that area. But what I don’t condone is that they come in and plunder an area and then once that’s knackered they would move on to another area which they’re not restricted to do just now. And its unlimited the amount they can work just now but then that could knacker the local grounds for a number of years to the local fisherman which haven’t got the option of moving elsewhere” Creel fisherman, Barra, the Outer Hebrides

So local views about nomadic boats from beyond the Outer Hebrides reveal how there can be conflict not only between sectors, but also within sectors.

It would seem, then, that within the fishing industry people can unite, whilst also standing apart, at different levels: at a Scottish versus foreign level, at an east coast versus west coast level, at a place-based level, and at a sector level. This shows how community-making is

operating at multiple levels within the industry, in line with Cohen's (1985) concept of 'community' as formed through identifying similarities and differences on a scale (see section 1.4).

In summary, there would appear to be many contradictions and conflicts between fishermen. Many of the internal fissures within the fishing community run along lines of place and sector. Thus notions of the fishing 'community' are multiple and complex: the fishing community operates on different levels, and at different scales. This was evident in all three of the case study areas, and is illustrative of how place-based communities can hold things in common but also harbour internal differences.

Differing attitudes emerge as a strong feature of the fishing community that would appear to inform internal fissures. The way such attitudes influence the development of the fishing industry, as well as wider territorial development in the case study areas, is discussed in the next and final section of this chapter, which looks at how some of these contradictions and conflicts play into how communities are envisioning their past, present and future.

#### **5.4 Alternative trajectories for communities**

A key characteristic of the communities is that there are contrasting attitudes, not only towards local demographic trends, but also towards the future of local development and the role of fishing within the three case study areas. Some respondents suggested that there are different attitudes between the three case study areas that have affected local development, reflecting different senses of local capacity and initiative. This section describes some of the different outlooks held within the communities, comparing the outlook of those in the fishing industry with those in the wider community. In examining these views, the section reveals alternative trajectories that the communities are envisaging with regards to the role of fishing and other economic opportunities in the future of their areas. In doing so, it reinforces the previous arguments that there is no single common vision of the community. There are different challenges and capacity issues, but is the communities being heterogeneous a problem or an opportunity? Is it simply that there needs to be a much more differentiated view of communities?

#### ***5.4.1 Different senses of local capacity and initiative***

There are different perceptions of local capacity, opportunity and initiative across the three case study areas. This is illustrated well by local attitudes towards aquaculture as an alternative means of employment to marine fishing, which varied considerably within the case study areas. The embracing of aquaculture was notable in Shetland. Many respondents suggested that wild fishing and aquaculture are all considered part of one fishing industry, and there were stories of fishermen moving into aquaculture and enjoying it even more than when they had been wild fishing:

“Russell actually went into aquaculture, salmon..... he and one of the chaps who was a shareholder with him on the [name of boat]... this guy approached them and said “would you come and take this boat I’ve got and do this work?” And they just loved it. They went all around Shetland and... met so many people, all inshore waters, no quotas to worry about, no licences... pay check at the end of the month and they really enjoyed it” Fisherman’s wife, Shetland

Another Shetland respondent also spoke highly of working in the aquaculture industry. For them, it did not matter whether someone had a commercial fishing boat or worked in aquaculture, it was all the fishing industry:

“I don’t know if you’ve interviewed any fishermen come fish farmers but I would guess...that anywhere they’ll say “well yeah, it’s a good job. It’s a job that uses my skills”... I’ve done both and loved both... it’s all producing quality seafood at the end of the day... of course one’s farming and one’s fishing but I don’t really see a huge difference” Ex-fisherman, Shetland

Meanwhile, in the Outer Hebrides perceptions were far less positive:

“15 years ago we had young people doing youth training schemes in aquaculture. Now these people are still there, but there are no opportunities... or limited opportunities for younger people because the need for the workers has gradually... people will go all over the island servicing fish farms where they used to have specific squads of people on each side” Ex-fisherman, Stornoway, the Outer Hebrides

For many respondents in the Outer Hebrides aquaculture was not a favoured diversification option. Respondents pointed to the freedom linked to fishing as deterring more commercial fishermen from moving to aquaculture. Wild marine fishing was described as “a more exciting job”, a particular kind of work that appealed to a particular kind of person. In

contrast, aquaculture was described as “very repetitive” and less interesting. A creel fisherman in Uist explained that he had tried aquaculture when he first left school “to see what it was all about”. He said “It was just feeding fish, and I thought, I can’t be bothered feeding fish, so I went back to the fishing boat”.

Regardless of any locational advantages that may favour or hinder aquaculture development opportunities, several people suggested that different attitudes exist between the three case study areas that has most affected the success of local development. In Shetland, the local community would appear to be striving to attract outside investment and to improve their quality of life generally, with aspiration and determination prevailing amongst respondents there:

“For the community itself I think we need to grab every opportunity we can find. For example there’s an old fish processing factory... that’s been lying empty for a number of years and I heard last night that maybe somebody’s going to start something up... We’re looking at a couple of renewable energy projects in the area, small scale hydro-scheme, that type of thing. I think we just have to try and be as innovative as we can in order to try and sustain our community in as many ways as we can” Fisheries manager, Shetland

A sense of control over its fishing industry and the future of the local community seems to exist in Shetland, in contrast to Fraserburgh and the Outer Hebrides. One interviewee alluded to historical cultural differences as possible reasons why attitudes to diversification and development between the three places was so different:

“In the 1960s... Shetland acquired a purse seine fleet and therefore has large pelagic factories and all that... The Western Isles didn’t... They haven’t embraced these technological advances in the whitefish industry so they’ve really only got a fleet of small prawn trawlers... They’ve another opportunity with fish farming and with wind farms... but they didn’t like purse seining and probably in 20 years they’ll say oh I wish we’d taken you up to do with fish farming” Fisheries representative, Shetland

A view outside of Shetland is that Shetland has enjoyed a strong level of leadership for its fishing industry and development more generally:

“There’s perhaps a chance here in offshore wind and energy... that would be suitable skills for the fishermen... But, how do you get involved with it?... We’ve had really very bad leadership in the Western Isles... Now Shetland have not. Shetland have been really good at what they’ve

done. They've harnessed the whole thing for their own benefit... must be down to one or two really interested people" Fish processor, North Uist, the Outer Hebrides

Shetlanders themselves tended to have a particularly optimistic, 'can do' attitude that contrasted with the views expressed in the other two case study areas. A fisheries manager talked about helping out others in Scotland who did not have their own management system:

"All the other areas in Scotland are sitting with these IFGs where they're not kind of entirely sure where that's going and they've got the management plans, some are done, some aren't... If they want to do anything is have a Regulating Order... I am more than happy to help anybody that wants to know what to do... We're really very very lucky" Fisheries representative, Shetland

Whereas aspiration, local management and enthusiasm prevail within Shetland, together with an optimistic sense of having control over their own destiny, the research found more of a 'can't do' attitude in Fraserburgh and the Outer Hebrides, revealing different senses of local capacity and initiative. A widespread perception in the Outer Hebrides is that the islands are heavily dependent on national funding for infrastructure and businesses, with a key feature of narratives in the Outer Hebrides being the desire to turn to external funding. There is a view here that external funding had been fundamental for the local fishing industry. Many people described how the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB) had "made grants on loans available for the construction of new fishing vessels", and how "a lot of people in this community took advantage":

"The price of the 35 foot in those days was seven thousand pounds. And of that... you had to produce ten per cent, which was, what?... Seven hundred pounds? You couldn't get it. So what happened... the Highland Fund... they had a scheme to help people...It's now stopped to be in existence but without the Highland Fund, none of these men would be able to, people did not have money" Local priest, the Outer Hebrides

People in the Outer Hebrides also revealed a feeling of being behind Shetland in the development of their fishing industry. A fisherman in Harris remarked that "the Shetland men have got more get up and go", whilst the Outer Hebrides "is a very laid back place (laughter)... they'd be apathetic if they could be bothered". Several respondents in both Fraserburgh and the Outer Hebrides suggested that outside investors often go elsewhere, and there was a perception that local apathy was hindering development:



“It’s so sad cos... Fraserburgh... was a vibrant town but... it’s not now. And even if the fishing sector came back... there’s developed an apathy in the town. You know... “Oh well... we couldn’t do this”, “Oh well... it will never work in Fraserburgh”... And you’ll hear people suggesting something “Oh no, no. No that would never work”” Local resident, Fraserburgh

One community narrative prevalent in Fraserburgh and the Outer Hebrides is that outside investors always choose to go elsewhere. The evidence also suggests that people in these two case study areas are feeling forced to diversify away from fishing, but are struggling with knowing how to do so. A fisherman in Fraserburgh suggested that the future rested on diversifying:

“I think in the future you will still have a fishing industry but I think that it’s going to be the surrounding community are not dependent on the fishing like what they were... I mean if I was the guy that was painting and I was used to painting 30 boats a year and I’m down to ten I would be needing to look for diversity in my business... Where before you had a plumber that was just working the boats, he now has got to try and get into houses as well... The net manufacturers, they can’t diversify much, but some of them have been able to get jobs in providing salmon nets for salmon farms... whereas before they didn’t need to” Prawn Skipper, Fraserburgh

However, many people feel poorly equipped to do this and uncertain about how to move forwards. In Fraserburgh and the Outer Hebrides diversifying into other lines of work was perceived to be difficult. This is despite respondents witnessing detrimental impacts on their businesses as a result of the contraction of the industry. When asked if he could diversify his business into something else, a fish processor in Uist said “If you can think of something tell me because it keeps me awake at night [laughter]”:

“If it’s not going to get better then people should just be told that... cos that’s what we discuss here all the time... What can we do to keep people who work? What will we do to make things easier for our own boats? Would it be better to have bigger boats, be more efficient like these other people... go all over the UK fishing, try and get our stuff back here?... keep people in the factory going?... Or can we diversify into something else?” Fish processor, Uist, The Outer Hebrides

Meanwhile in Shetland people appeared to be much more positive about diversifying and attracting outside investment, although there appeared to be less feeling of pressure on fishermen to diversify away from the fishing or to leave the industry. Local fisheries managers spoke of there being hardly any decommissioning in Shetland, with one saying he

would like to think Shetland is ahead of the game, but that it was hard to convince people in Shetland of this because people want to go further. It was common for respondents in Shetland to talk about aspirations they had to improve Shetland and their own lives. However despite this success, Shetlanders appear to struggle to be convinced by their progress. Many respondents suggested that they were fighting to keep their heads above water and to stay ahead. For example, some fishermen were aspiring to have better boats:

“I’ll probably buy another boat... and jump up a bit again... I wouldn’t say bigger, more capable... capable of staying aboard longer. I wouldn’t say going farther... I’m home every night... Just a bit more comfort, that’s what I’m looking for” Scallop fisherman, Shetland

In Shetland businesses appear to be more content with the opportunities and needs for diversification, whilst in the other areas the onshore businesses appear to be more reluctant, or at an earlier stage of developing their options. So it would seem that while all three case study areas are facing similar difficulties in the face of a shrinking fishing industry, each is at a different stage of moving on and recovering.

#### ***5.4.2 Necessity for local employment opportunities***

Several respondents felt that the only way to keep people in the community was to provide wider local employment beyond fishing. However, between the three case study areas, there were different views towards the availability of alternative local employment. Perceptions of employment opportunities, both within and out with the fishing industry, were varied. They ranged from the predominant view from respondents in Shetland that there have been decades of appropriate employment opportunities both within the fishing industry and in other sectors, to concerns in the Outer Hebrides over a lack of employment within the islands generally. In Shetland, proactively attracting young people of working age back to the islands has been seen as a priority:

“One of the big challenges for Shetland is... to make every opportunity available for young Shetlanders who want to come back and work in some of these industries... I think all rural communities... have always faced this but it’s probably worse now than ever before. There’s a real attraction of people living in cities as opposed to communities like this so, that’s why I think projects like... the big arts centre in Lerwick is so important. We can never replicate a city in Shetland or in Lerwick but if we can provide as many of the good social and leisure facilities as a city can than there’s more chance of young Shetlanders wanting to come back and live here” Local resident, Shetland

However, people pointed to several external barriers to local development in their communities. Some respondents blamed ‘environmentalists’ for hindering opportunities for local employment, both within the fishing industry but also in the wider territorial community. For example, at the time of the research in Shetland there was controversy over whether or not to build wind turbines as part of an income generation project for the islands. Local residents were caught up in a dilemma revolving around generating local income and employment against the wider aesthetic consequences of building hundreds of wind turbines on the islands. This reflects a similar debate in the Outer Hebrides about a super quarry being built on Harris:

“There was going to be a super quarry... which got the go ahead after the most expensive public enquiry in British history. And then the Scottish Government turned it down... Some local people were against it. But in the main I would say it was incomers that were against it... tree huggers (laughter)... They eventually found a fern or a moss that didn’t grow anywhere else, so that was a good excuse not to have a quarry” Local resident, Harris, the Outer Hebrides

There are issues too with diversifying into tourism in Scottish fishing communities. There were perceived barriers to the development of tourism in Fraserburgh and Shetland, whilst tourism appeared to be a key industry for people to diversify into in the Outer Hebrides. Location was highlighted as a main reason why business development was difficult for Fraserburgh:

“We’re sort of way out in the sticks here... Fraserburgh seems to have absolutely no interest in tourism... The tourism tended to end in Aberdeen and go to Inverness. And then the west coast is obviously scenic wise, so this corner tended to be lost out” Local resident, Fraserburgh

In Shetland, the poor weather and the wildness of the seas around its islands was highlighted as a major barrier to expanding a tourism industry. Tourism was therefore seen as a limited avenue for the local economy:

“Whalsay’s lacking in [chalets]. There’s very little holiday accommodation... I don’t know if it would be a commercial venture or not. They’d only be used a few months of the summer” Pelagic skipper, Shetland

It is clear that tourism is not seen as an easy or obvious option for people in the case study areas. Nor do tourist spots necessarily correlate to where there is a local fishing industry. For example, on my way to a small fishing village in north Shetland on a mini-bus full of foreign

tourists, I witnessed them all disembark at the Unst ferry terminal, leaving me alone to ride the final leg of the bus journey to the fishing village.

Energy generation would appear to be providing employment opportunities for some people in the case study areas, and in many instances it appears to be an important route for those who have chosen to move on from the fishing industry. In Shetland it would seem many people have chosen alternatives to fishing at the local oil terminal. A fisherman's wife in Fraserburgh also explained that many of the young people in her community were going into the industry for long-term security:

“A lot of them are going into the offshore industry... Things have been so uncertain within the fishing... everyone's looking for security [does this include pelagic fishermen as well as demersal?].... The ones who have engineering degrees and things, they've been able to find long-term contracts within the oil industry” Fisherman's wife, Fraserburgh

However local attitudes towards diversifying into the oil and renewables industries were complex, and highlighted a disparity between offshore energy generation and onshore involvement. In some instances there were perceptions that there are not the opportunities to harness renewable energy or oil. For example, whilst many young people in Fraserburgh were said to be seeking employment in the offshore energy sector, the capacities around the harbour to harness employment from the energy sector were perceived to be limited. Several onshore businesses around the harbour said that Fraserburgh was not geared up for the oil industry:

“We haven't pursued the oil... Fraserburgh's not very well geared up for it... The little boats can come in here, the big boats can't... That's Aberdeen, and there are people in Aberdeen so... why are they going to take me to travel from 40 mile away when they've got someone local?... The facility's not here for the bigger ones so that avenues limited... And we don't want to shift lock, stock and barrel that's for sure. We want to stay local” Ships' electrician, Fraserburgh

But it also appeared that whilst moving to the oil in Shetland may have helped in the short term, it is not seen necessarily as a long-term solution for the islands. A fisheries manager in Shetland explained that the oil “has gone from a torrent to a trickle” with reserves running out in the North Sea using the standard extraction methods, such that only specialist extractors can get the oil now. Many people in Shetland described how the oil is now running out. This

was also reflected by local views in Fraserburgh, where many people in Fraserburgh conveyed a fear towards the short-term of the oil:

“Everybody... if you try hard enough... you can do something different. But to be forced into it, it’s not easy, ken... Especially fishermen... The majority of them will get some sort of job in the oil industry... And it’s okay as long as the oil industry’s booming. But in ten, twenty, thirty years time... if there’s no fishing and the oil goes crap [laughter] what are they going to do?... This could turn really rotten in years to come” Harbour electrician, Fraserburgh

So there are mixed responses to the oil industry. Some people are going into the oil, particularly the young and less established fishermen, because they see it as a better, more secure option. But others, especially those who have been in the fishing industry a long time, are resisting the oil because they see it as a short-term, time-limited resource. Fishing, in contrast, is viewed as a long-term industry because of the renewable nature of the resource.

#### ***5.4.3 Incorporating fishing within wider territorial development***

The findings suggest that people in the fishing industry see themselves as working with a renewable resource and so operate with a long-term mind-set. It was pointed out by several respondents that that whilst many industries would appear to have come and gone in their local communities over the years, fishing has persisted for centuries, and has outlived many other industries in the three case study areas.

Also, despite the presence of some suitable employment opportunities outside of fishing, respondents in all three areas stressed the importance of the local fishing industry for the local community. The evidence suggests that people will fish no matter what, with those determined to fish struggling to survive, but carrying on nevertheless:

“People... they’re not going into the job... And I personally don’t blame them... I didn’t encourage my own son to go into it. My brother’s son... he’s only 19. And every day I tell him “I don’t know why you’re doing this”... But it’s in the blood to an extent. They do want to do it” Ex-fisherman, Uist, The Outer Hebrides

Similarly, in Fraserburgh, a trawler man described his 15 year old son’s commitment to fishing, saying “He’s always said he wanted to come on the boat... He’s been away on the boat the last three years, four years in the summer holidays... just away to see the job”. This fisherman explained how he himself had actively tried to pursue a different career at school, but ended up fishing nevertheless:

“Fishing’s just always been in the blood...But I was determined to do something different. When I was at school I was actually sitting nine O-levels, I was going to be an architect. I wasn’t going to the fishing...” Fisherman, Fraserburgh

Sustaining the local fishing industry appears to have been a long-term priority for Shetlanders where it has integrated the sector into its local territorial economy. Shetlanders described a keenness to protect and enhance their fishing industry and have maximised alternative income-generating projects to help the quality of life on the islands and their fishing industry. Shetland fisheries managers described the capital and efforts that have gone in to buying quota from boats that were getting decommissioned in the rest of the country in order to provide a community “pool” of quota for local fishermen:

“We were aware of it happening with big fishing companies and we knew that if we didn’t get in on the game here we were going to be lost... We...got the lawyers to draw up a legal document so that if you got your quota from the PO... that doesn’t get attached to your track record. It goes right back in the pool. So nobody can touch that fish. And it was just, seen as a way of investment for the industry, for the future of the industry, something that no one could hopefully take away” Fisheries liaison officer, Shetland

“Lots of POs in Scotland took in their levies and then gave every fisherman a rebate at the end of the year. We decided not to do that. We kept the money within the organisation because we knew that we would want to invest it and I think that’s been the right decision... A long term view was taken on what to do with that money... This wasn’t a quota pool for Burra, or Whalsay or Skerries or Yell, this was a quota pool for the whole of Shetland... and it’s certainly given Shetland fishermen an edge and an advantage” Fisheries manager, Shetland

In summary, there are contrasting attitudes towards future aspirations within each of the three case study areas, about the opportunities and difficulties facing people in the fishing industry, as well as the challenges facing the wider territorial community. It would appear that the communities, whilst all facing changes as a result of a shrinking fishing industry, are at different stages of moving on and recovering from that. In Fraserburgh there is a resistance to moving on and perceptions that there are not the opportunities to do so. Fishing businesses are slowly taking on non-fishing work. This is in contrast to Shetland where the sector appears to have reinvented itself, where the majority of people no longer work in the fishing industry and the sector has been integrated into local territorial development. In the Outer Hebrides people spoke about feeling worlds apart from Shetland in terms of harnessing renewable energy or aquaculture opportunities, and industry development generally.

So the fishing communities are not the same. They will therefore require locally tailored approaches to their future sectoral and territorial development. It might be argued that a positive outlook and the luck of the oil would appear to have helped Shetland. However, it would also appear that differing attitudes and local capacities are affecting both opportunities in the fishing industry and also opportunities in other industries in the three case study areas.

## **5.5 Summary**

In summary, there are inherent contradictions within the fishing communities that are centred upon multiple and dynamic populations, fissures within the sector, and contrasting future outlooks. A diverse mix of people and occupations within fishing communities now means the ability to fit in, settle and contribute are key components of understanding senses of ‘we’ and ‘they’, highlighting the contradiction that being born in a place and working in the fishing industry informs the ‘community’. Similarly, there are clearly processes of leaving and coming back to the communities, by local people, at different stages of their life, breaking through any notion of fishing communities being static or fixed. The flow of people in to and out of the case study areas affects some more positively than others, and the different views correlate to some extent to whether or not one works in the fishing industry. The employment of foreign nationals provides an example through which to understand the conflicts that exist. These conflicts are accentuated by looking at different places, and different sectors. Finally, different senses of local capacity and initiative appear to have had a direct effect on local social and economic development in the case study areas. What would appear to be true across all areas is the importance of a local fishing industry for the local economy. Here, Shetland can be seen as an example where the fishing industry has been successfully integrated into the islands’ wider economic development in order to keep a strong local fishing industry going.

Looking across the chapter, a recurring theme is that there is no ‘one size fits all’. The communities are multi-layered and there are different views about how to move forward. Meanwhile, whilst there are now many different activities for one to be involved with in the case study areas, and despite the divisions and complexities within the industry, fishing nevertheless holds a wider importance. It would seem that many people continue to identify with the fishing industry in Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland, even within diversified local economies where fishing is now a relatively modest economic activity. So

whilst the coastal communities would appear to be ‘bound’ by many strands of cohesion, fishing is still an important string to the community bow. It would seem that people will continue to fish no matter what. But how that plays out in each fishing community is different and is affected by the support and encouragement generated both within and outside of the areas. Fisheries policy may have to work more closely with other local development departments to address the needs of the different sections of the industry. This is discussed in more depth in Chapter 6.



## Chapter 6. Reflecting on notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ to inform social objectives

### 6.1 Introduction

The overarching aim of this thesis has been to inform the social dimension of fisheries policy by looking at notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ from the perspective and experiences of those living and working within coastal fishing communities in Scotland. Returning to the original three research questions as set out in Chapter 1 (see section 1.5), this chapter draws together the findings of the research to highlight the key strands relating to social issues in fishing communities that need to be considered when thinking about fisheries policy.

The first part of this chapter addresses research question 1 concerning the nature of the fishing ‘community’ and how people living in these communities ‘depend’ on fishing. It discusses the character and heterogeneity of the fishing ‘community’ in Scotland, reflecting on processes of community making and the similarities and differences that are bringing people together, and standing people apart. It also draws out policy relevant themes from the research that provide some of the key coordinates of social considerations and objectives within fisheries policy. The second part of the chapter looks at research question 2 concerning the key social and cultural challenges perceived by fishing communities. It focuses on three key matters of contention that people living within the case study areas are dealing with presently: (i) a problem of disconnect with government policy and science; (ii) issues affecting the social renewal of both the fishing industry and also the wider territorial community; and (iii) the importance of flexible strategies for people living and working in the case study areas. Having identified these pressing social and cultural concerns, the concluding section of the chapter turns to research question 3 which asks what is meant by the social objectives of fisheries policy and how they might be given concrete meaning. It discusses how the ‘social’ context, outlined in the earlier parts of the chapter, can be integrated into fisheries management. Reflecting on the significance of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ for understanding both individual and collective behaviour, the chapter argues that it is not just the outcomes (or the *what*) of fisheries management that

needs to be looked at, but also the processes (the *how*) of policy formulation and implementation.

## **6.2 The complexity and heterogeneity of the fishing ‘community’**

By examining notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ with people living in coastal communities in Scotland this research has demonstrated that the concept of the fishing ‘community’ is complex and multiple. Understandings of the fishing ‘community’ are illuminated by the everyday social and occupational routines of people living in the case study areas, both who fish and who do not, as illustrated in Chapter 3. Everyday routines incorporate social and business networks and relationships, as well as early socialisation into sea-faring and fishing as a way of life. Further awareness of what constitutes the fishing ‘community’ is developed through looking at the shared feelings, values and emotions of people living and working in the case study areas, as discussed in Chapter 4, showing that ‘community’ does not rest solely on place or occupation. The meanings that people attach to their lives and experiences include prevalent feelings of marginalisation, neglect, and the perception of ‘external threats’. Chapter 5 described how the daily routines and shared communities of the mind differ from case to case, both across and within communities. For example, there are contrasting aspirations for local territorial development and the place of the fishing industry within that. These aspirations in part mirror differing diversification strategies away from the sector, highlighting the complexity of what is holding people together, and what is acting upon fishing ‘communities’ in Scotland.

Similarly, the notion of fisheries ‘dependency’ is multi-layered, where people’s dependence on fishing who live in these communities has economic importance and socio-cultural significance. Places have been described as fisheries ‘dependent’ where there is a large percentage of the local population with an income-dependence on fishing (Scottish Government, 2010). For example, in Fraserburgh 19.6 % of the population holds a job in the fishing industry. However, this research has illustrated how economic dependence on fishing is not straightforward. An income from fishing can be gained in several different ways. First, it can be gained by working in the catching sector as a fisherman, or as a retired fisherman or associate who holds a share in a vessel or has access to quota, or ‘days’, that he rents out to other fishermen. It can also be gained by working in onshore businesses that service fishing vessels. The onshore sector of the fishing industry includes harbour trades such as marine

engineering, boat electricians or “sparkies”, boat painters and net makers. It also includes fish agents, fish buyers, fisheries managers, representatives and consultants. Furthermore, the data have shown that there are more than just those who work in the catching sector or the onshore trades whose activity, income and way of life depend on the fishing industry. There are also the processors who employ people to work in fish factories. In addition, high street shops, food stores, personal and business services, and other businesses in close proximity to a working fishing harbour also show an income-dependence on fishing where their businesses are fed to an important extent by those involved in the industry (see section 3.2.5). Within all three case study areas the local high street businesses are perceived, by local people, to be affected financially by the fishing industry.

But fisheries ‘dependency’ is also deeply socio-cultural. For example whilst the town of Fraserburgh is perceived locally to be economically ‘dependent’ on fishing, it is also seen by fishers and non-fishing respondents alike to have a town identity tied to the industry, demonstrating in some cases that ‘place’, ‘coastal’ and ‘fishing’ can be synonymous. Life modes and world views are, to a degree, shaped by the values, routines and concerns of the fishing industry. A key feature of socio-cultural ‘dependency’ is the links between people within (and indeed beyond) the case study areas. Interpersonal relationships are dynamic and active, and would appear to be crucial to understanding concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’.

### ***6.2.1 Relationships***

The foundations of the Scottish fishing industry rest on the existence of strong interpersonal relationships, reciprocity and familiarity, extending ideas in the literature about social factors that forge close bonds between people in the sector (van Ginkel, 2001; Hanna, 1998).

Moreover, it is clear that the close and familial social networks extend beyond the fishing industry to the wider territorial community. A sense of indivisibility between the fishing industry and the wider community would appear to bring about a particular kind of closeness, trust and dependability between people in the case study areas (see section 3.2.5). The social and business networks even extend beyond the local community to fishing communities in other parts of the UK and beyond. What remains of the industry in Scotland, then, may be highly industrial in form, and capitalised in structure in some places, but even here the sector is still characterised by close interpersonal relationships and family and business networks that extend beyond the industry to the wider territorial community.

A culture of self-sufficiency and reciprocity has emerged as a key finding in understanding the fishing ‘community’ in Scotland, both from an economic point of view but also from a social and cultural perspective, and speaks of the importance of relationships in the case study areas. A lifestyle and a tradition that incorporates both small scale farming (crofting) and fishing in the Outer Hebrides and Shetland would appear to inform a wider culture of mutual support and self-sufficiency. In Fraserburgh too, many have a clear idea about who they feel obliged to and who they can expect to receive help from in return. Being geographically isolated and remote from other people and places, and subject to challenging weather and environmental conditions, daily life in the case study areas, and in the fishing industry, is dictated by a need to get along with one another, an expectation to make a contribution, and a physical need to survive the elements. The nature of the fishing ‘community’ suggests that any claim that fishermen are now acting individually, and that the community is disintegrating, are premature. Yes, there are cases of fishermen acting individually, and senses of loss and/or change. Yet these are set within a wider context, where fishermen continue to be fundamentally dependent on the relationships with their agents, families, neighbours, crew, suppliers etc. However, whilst a narrative of self-sufficiency may highlight a quality of resilience that people feel in the case study areas, the evidence suggests that understandings of self-sufficiency are contradictory. For example, in many instances, a sense of isolation would appear to lead to a desire for outside help and also significant criticism of what are perceived to be external threats.

An awareness of the important role that strong interpersonal relationships play in the infrastructure of the communities, both onshore and at sea, has implications for fisheries policy. Jentoft (2000) suggests that distant management can weaken such “social bonds” within local communities that revolve around traditions, values and a sense of social responsibility (p.54). His claims may well present warnings for the communities explored in this thesis. The majority of respondents reported the importance of strong interpersonal relationships to their job, and that was seen in the wider territorial community and wider sector networks. However, the research has also revealed evidence of changing social relations, and pressures on processes of social renewal within the sector. At a general level, severe contractions of the sector may be putting at risk informal processes of social and knowledge renewal in the industry (see Chapter 3). There is a case then for fishermen’s networks and community institutions to be more supported into the future. More specifically, a consequence of the finding that many fishers’ route into the industry is through familial

networks, and that an important part of their training is often carried out informally, could be that attention is warranted to further recognising the value of experience-based or informal learning within approaches to knowledge formation and industry renewal.

### ***6.2.2 Empathy***

A key feature of the fishing ‘community’ would appear to be shared feelings of empathy and grief for those whose lives are lost at sea. Empathy created within the communities, in response to someone losing their life whilst out fishing, supports those ideas in the literature that suggest that interpersonal closeness results between people who share the same element of physical danger in their fishing occupation, whether directly or because they live in close proximity to others who do, as a way of coping with it (van Ginkel, 2001). An acute notion of ‘loss’ in the case study areas also relates to the depletion of the fishing industry, a fishing way of life, and the decommissioning of fishing vessels. Such feelings concerning the decline of the fishing industry highlight a widespread regard amongst people in the case study areas, both those who fish and who do not, for the industry and its way of life. The evidence illustrates that empathy occurs not only between people who work in fishing but also extends to people who live in the wider territorial community - those not directly employed in fishing, but who live in the case study areas. Many non-fishing respondents living in Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland identify their community as a ‘fishing’ community and empathise with the fishing way of life. In this respect, the research provides further evidence of the wider socio-cultural importance of fishing that is rarely incorporated into analysis of the ‘socio-economic’ role of the sector.

A sense of connection to and empathy with fishing that involves both people who work directly in the industry, and a majority who do not but who live in the wider territorial area and beyond, highlights the power of imagined communities for informing how people are brought together in fishing ‘communities’. Empathy pervades fishing households and networks, but these households and networks are connected to the wider community also, such that the fishing ‘community’ can accommodate people who are not directly employed in the fishing industry, and also who might live in a different place. An ability to empathise with the fishing industry is tied to peoples’ sense of belonging and identity. This can revolve around a particular place, such as the town of Fraserburgh, which is strongly characterised by fishing. However, whilst emotional connection to, and empathy with fishing, would appear to inform a fundamental sense of ‘togetherness’ amongst people, this is not necessarily place-

specific. The data reveal that people are able to empathise readily with those in other fishing places through shared occupational bonds and mutual understanding of the fishing industry. As a result, the significance of connection to and empathy with those involved in fishing is that it encompasses, but also breaks through place- and sector-based ideas of the fishing ‘community’ or fisheries ‘dependency’. Such findings are in line with the literature that suggests that fishing communities are not necessarily place-based, but are formed through a feeling of ‘togetherness’ (Brookfield et al, 2005).

As such, the findings expand on place- and occupational-based definitions of the fishing ‘community’ to include collective senses of empathy within and across different fisheries areas. The fishing ‘community’ then is informed by not only sets of practices and routines, but also shared emotions. Grief and empathy unite people not only in particular fishing locations, but also across fishing locations around the UK coastline and beyond. This highlights the importance of considering the feelings and emotional responses of people affected by fisheries policy when thinking about how to sustain coastal communities. This might involve adding explicit non-monetary values held within the fishing industry and local communities to the cost-benefit balance when policy options are appraised.

### ***6.2.3 Fishing and ‘community’ identities***

There is clear evidence that fisheries ‘dependency’ includes a deep emotional attachment to a way of life that is characterised by autonomy, freedom and risk. Passion and pride in one’s fishing occupation is an inherent part of working in the industry, illustrating that for many fishing is a positive source of self-identity (van Ginkel, 2001; Nadel-Klein, 2000). Such personal and emotional investment in fishing, and attachment to fishing businesses, may explain why many people in coastal communities find it difficult to consider, or feel ill equipped for, diversifying away from fishing, and highlights the importance of a local fishing industry for people living in coastal towns and villages in Scotland. As a result, current definitions of ‘dependency’ may need to be broadened to take account of the strength of attachment to fishing as a positive identity. A shared sense of personal and collective identity tied to place, fishing and the sea is in keeping with ideas in the literature about how fishing contributes to a sense of personal identity for people working and living in the fishing industry (Williams, 2008; van Ginkel, 2001) and this research has highlighted that this also extends to many others within the wider community.

The populations and local economies of those areas that have traditionally been regarded as ‘fishing communities’ are now much more diverse and there are multiple ‘community’ identities at play including, but also interwoven with and extending beyond, fishing. People living in the case study areas are from a range of backgrounds and hold a diversity of jobs such that feelings of ‘togetherness’ are not solely tied to fishing. Whilst many non-fishing respondents still come from fishing families originally, there are far more activities outside of fishing for one to be involved with and that give people a sense of themselves and their culture. However, whilst there are now many more alternative employment opportunities within the case study areas, it would seem that the fishing industry nevertheless holds particular importance for people, and it seems to unite a diversity of people and businesses. Furthermore, having dynamic and changing populations in what were once traditional fishing communities means the ability to fit in, settle, contribute and get along with one another - characteristics of the fishing industry - stands out strongly today as a key component of the communities. This may explain why although people in fishing areas in Scotland feel that fishing opportunities are disappearing, they still hold a strong sense of solidarity with the industry. Those in the fishing industry who participated in the research wanted to stay working in it, and those that did not often saw themselves as being from a “fishing” place and valued this as part of their own identity. As a result, fishing would appear to remain a defining feature for peoples’ sense of self, their feeling of belonging to a place, and their community.

#### ***6.2.4 A ‘we/they’ mentality***

A powerful psychological process at work in the case study areas is the creation of a polarised ‘us’ and ‘them’ perspective that is demonstrated in many different forms, realised in different groups, and of which the boundaries may change depending on the particular issue. Notions of ‘we’ and ‘they’ are crucial for understanding fisheries ‘community’, because they reveal the process of relationship-making within the fishing industry. The research suggests that people identify similarities and differences to one another using a we/they mentality and that this serves to help communities define their own identity. For example, dialects and language help people retain a sense of themselves, who they are, where they are from and what they identify with, particularly in terms of a coastal identity (see section 3.4.2). They also serve to help people make distinctions within the same case study area. For example, in Fraserburgh, people can speak differently to those only a mile or so inland from Fraserburgh. So just as readily as something can be seen as similar and therefore unites people, so too can

it stand people apart. Therefore it is difficult to pin down what the fishing ‘community’ is. There are multiple lines of difference and these lines criss-cross one another.

There is still a sense of a fishing ‘community’ within a wider territorial community in the case study areas. However, a ‘we/they’ mentality extends to practices of relating to the wider world as well. For example, a sense of ‘we’ and ‘they’ between Shetland and the Outer Hebrides is exacerbated by feelings of being advantaged versus feelings of being disadvantaged. However something that unites most people in the Scottish fishing industry is that local Scottish boats are ‘we’ and foreign boats are ‘they’. A ‘we/they’ mentality is also relevant for understanding the relationship between fisheries sectors. When speaking about the way fisheries management is going, a fisherman can speak as if he and the entire Scottish fishing industry are united or as if he and his immediate neighbours stand apart from other parts of the industry. So what might be seen as simple, black-and-white, straightforward understandings of fishermen, and fishing communities, may be serving to hinder sustainable fisheries management. The research has shown that ‘they’ can be other fishermen, policy officials, fisheries representatives, scientists, the national government, the media, the wider public, and the European Commission. In all these instances the dynamic of creating an ‘us’ and a ‘them’ informs a multi-layered process of community building. This may also suggest that if ‘we’ and ‘they’ processes are central to ‘community’ making, and serve an important role in this, they may be self-reinforcing and difficult to break down. This may present a serious dilemma for solving conflicts within fishing communities and between the fishing sector and the outside world. Here the test is to engineer constructive processes of ‘community-making’ across traditional dividing lines of ‘we’ and ‘they’.

### ***6.2.5 ‘Communities’ in a state of flux***

All three places would seem to be in a constant state of flux, with both inward and outward migration which highlights a need for a dynamic and outward looking view of the future of fishing communities. It is common for young people to leave the communities when they are young for university, work away for a number of years, and then return in their 30s or 40s to settle (see section 5.2.3). At the same time, the out-migration of young people is a key concern for many people living in the case study areas, and a widespread perception is that the communities are becoming ‘retirement centres’. There are different views about whether or not inward and outward migration weakens a sense of ‘community’; in some cases people feel the community is not what it once was, but in other cases a mixing of peoples is viewed



as strengthening the communities, and people moving into an area are valued for keeping the local population going.

Just as the wider territorial community is in a state of flux, so too is the fishing industry. There are many contradictions and conflicts between fishermen, and internal fissures within the fishing industry, along lines of sector, fleet segment and place. In the past the majority of people working in the fishing industry were locally born and bred. Now people working in the industry are not only from different parts of Scotland, in many cases they are also from different countries in Europe and beyond. There are contrasting views on the reasons for this, reflecting differences not only between the communities, but also between the sectors of the fishing industry. Foreign nationals are often seen as both cheaper and more reliable, in the face of increasing financial difficulties, and would appear to be crucial for sustaining much of the fishing industry now. That foreign nationals are prevalent in some places and sectors of the industry more than others suggests that the industry is undergoing different stages of development, contraction and stability. For example, whilst in Shetland the diversification of onshore businesses is already well established, in Fraserburgh fish related businesses appear to be at an earlier stage of diversifying their fishing industry.

#### ***6.2.6 Contrasting future outlooks***

There are contrasting future aspirations within and between the case study areas about the opportunities and difficulties facing people in the fishing industry, as well as the challenges facing the wider territorial community. Some feel that different local attitudes have affected local development, reflecting different levels of local capacity and initiative. Whereas aspiration and enthusiasm prevail in Shetland, together with an optimistic sense of having control over their own destiny, there is more of a 'can't do' attitude in Fraserburgh and the Outer Hebrides that should be a key focus for local capacity building and development in the future. It would seem then that while all three are facing similar difficulties in the face of a shrinking fishing industry, each is at a different stage of moving on and recovering. In some cases there is a resistance to doing so, or perceptions that there are not the opportunities, for example, to harness renewable energy, aquaculture, or industry development. In Fraserburgh fishing businesses are slowly taking on non-fishing work. This is in contrast to Shetland where the sector appears to have reinvented itself and been integrated successfully into the wider local economy. So fishing communities are not the same. They will depend on locally tailored approaches to their future sectoral and territorial development. The Shetland case

study provides an example of the success that can be harnessed by looking at the relationships, interdependencies and opportunities at the interface between sectoral and territorial development.

In summary, the fishing ‘community’ is characterised by interpersonal relationships and social and business networks that are bound by routines of risk and uncertainty and that are built on emotions of empathy, loyalty and trust. Such interpersonal networks are characteristic of the fishing industry but also extend beyond the sector to businesses in the wider territorial community, around the Scottish coastline, and beyond. The fishing ‘community’ is also inherently contradictory. The case study areas consist of diverse local economies, made up of people with different senses of ties to each other and to fishing. There are different dynamics of ‘togetherness’ that extend beyond the fishing industry and point to wider notions of ‘the community’ at work. This suggests that there is a scale upon which fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ can be understood, a scale that extends from the individual, to a household, a business, the wider territorial community and other geographic locations, dismissing any single understanding of ‘community’. The evidence therefore moves understandings of the fishing ‘community’ beyond ‘place’ and ‘occupation’ to practices, relationships, meanings and processes. Place plays an important part in the idea of the fishing community, but the research shows that the fishing community is much more than that. People identify with their place-based community in ways that reach far beyond the fishing industry; though at the same time fishing is something that ties many to their place of dwelling or work and which contributes to their sense of personal identity. Current definitions of the fishing ‘community’ then according to place, job or history, need to be broadened to take account of the role of daily routines, communities of the mind and inherent contradictions in community-making.

The next section focuses on the major challenges facing people in the case study areas under the meta themes of ‘disconnect’, ‘social renewal’ and ‘flexibility’, before returning to the issue of social objectives in fisheries policy.

### **6.3 Key challenges facing fishing communities**

The previous section discussed the multi-layered nature of the fishing ‘community’ in Scotland and how people ‘depend’ on fishing. This section examines how people in

Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland are responding to changes in the fishing industry and suggests some of the primary social challenges facing them. In doing so, it addresses the second research question of the thesis concerning the key challenges facing fishing communities. Three main issues are identified: (i) a problem of disconnect with fisheries policy and science; (ii) difficulties of social renewal both within the fishing industry but also within the wider territorial communities; and (iii) the importance of flexible strategies for people living and working in the case study areas.

### ***6.3.1 A problem of disconnect with fisheries policy and science***

People in the case study areas are brought together through mutual feelings of powerlessness, marginalisation, and having to defend themselves against external threat. There is a general belief that the fishing industry is undervalued by a wider general public, with many working in the fishing industry feeling pushed down by policy and science. Many respondents feel that the widely held public views concerning dwindling fish stocks and ‘headlines’ surrounding the unsustainable practices of fishermen are unfair. The complex nature of ‘community making’ is highlighted by a perceived lack of empathy from the outside world bringing people together. A perception of negative views of the fishing industry, a widely held perception that local people are being forced to find alternative employment outside of the fishing industry, and a shared sense of victimization and feeling misunderstood, would appear to intensify and reinforce a sense of compassion for one another within the case study areas.

The evidence suggests that feelings of marginalisation serve to reinforce the industry’s sense of itself as a victim, around which it mobilizes resistance and community. For example, people who fish come together through a shared perception of being acted upon or even labelled as ‘criminals’. This highlights a process of community-making at work based on notions of ‘we’ and ‘they’: ‘we’ being the fishing community, and ‘they’ being the wider world. Reflecting on this, a key feature of ‘community’ can be the act of setting up external threats as a way of asserting the self, such that policy, science and the public are also factors in creating the ‘fishing community’. Fishermen’s organisations can often choose to adopt ‘strategies of resistance’ to reinforce their own roles and membership support and this may undermine and be challenged by efforts to engage them in policy making processes as responsible partners (Phillipson, 2002).

Despite efforts to date, the evidence points to serious problems remaining with communication and understanding between policy, fisheries science and fishing communities, and a polarisation of the stakeholders. There continues to be a lack of confidence in the science and policy system and people in the communities feel deeply confused and unable to trust the ‘science’ upon which fisheries decisions are based. A consequence of this breakdown in communication is that there is a lot of anger felt by people in the communities that is directed at government scientists and policy makers, and people are ‘losing heart’ in the rules because of increasingly restrictive regulations. This is in keeping with suggestions that effective natural resource management vitally depends on trust between the resource harvesters and national policy makers (Glenn et al., 2012; Weeks and Packard, 1997).

There is a widely held view within the case study areas that government scientists and decision-makers do not understand the practicalities of the fishing industry and what drives people involved in fishing and why they behave the way they do. People feel that policy decisions are far removed from the realities of the fishing industry or indeed the true health of the sector and fisheries. Furthermore, many people within the industry experience a general sense of abandonment. A commonly held view within the communities is that government scientists are undervaluing local knowledge. The perception that policies are based on information gathered from fixed scientific measurements, clashes with the communities’ own view that there can be no guarantee of where the fish are because of the chaotic and unpredictable nature of the sea. In addition, people in the case study areas do not appear to understand the justification behind many of the decisions taken by policy makers and feel that their efforts to conserve stocks are being misunderstood, or even ignored. Fishermen are keen to support the long-term health of the stocks and generally agree that there should be a management regime in place. However, it would seem that they are at odds with the solutions coming from the decision makers or the way in which they are formulated and implemented. The social and economic costs of failures in fisheries management are therefore not only people losing their livelihoods, but also alienation between decision-makers and those who the policy is trying to engage.

Grievances with policy seem to exacerbate feelings of inequality between the different fishing communities also, where a policy measure required to address a specific problem in one area is applied on a national scale. Because fisheries regulation operates on a multi-level scale, designed primarily in Brussels but implemented by member state governments, it is not

always evident in the local communities' concerns just which level of government is seen as the problem, or if it is all three. In many ways the external threat is seen as even more threatening, or is presented as such by fishing representatives, because it is so unspecified and complex. Communities can therefore present a non-discriminating defence against everything that is external or policy. The object of threat is amorphous, general, unclear and distant. However, this confusion in itself serves to make a point that external threat seems to be crucial to reinforcing a sense of togetherness in the case study areas.

The feelings of 'disconnect' and 'powerlessness' identified by the research calls for further attention to processes and channels for engagement of fishing communities within fisheries policy and science, and the current structures through which fisheries organisations represent local communities. Learning from the experience of the IFGs will be key, as well as new structures for engagement. For example the Fisheries Management and Conservation group (FMAC) is a key body for decision making in Scotland, a year-old group which in 2012 replaced the Scottish Government's Conservation Credits group. It is made up of representatives from Marine Scotland, processors from the fishing industry and green NGOs. FMAC meets every quarter and discusses fisheries policy issues such as discards and the inshore sector. Of the people that sit on the group, there are a number of leading fisheries representatives, from the Scottish Fisherman's Federation (SFF), the Scottish Whitefish Association (SWFA), and the Scottish Fisherman's Organisation (SFO).

It was not the role of the research to evaluate the success of processes of engagement with the fisheries sector, or the structure and effectiveness of fisheries representation in reflecting the needs of local communities, but it would seem that this is a relevant issue. The data provided by this research could also be hinting at a gap or disconnect between fishermen on the ground and the representation that they are receiving at decision-making level. It may suggest a need for the industry too to revisit its own internal representative processes and strategies for external communication and engagement.

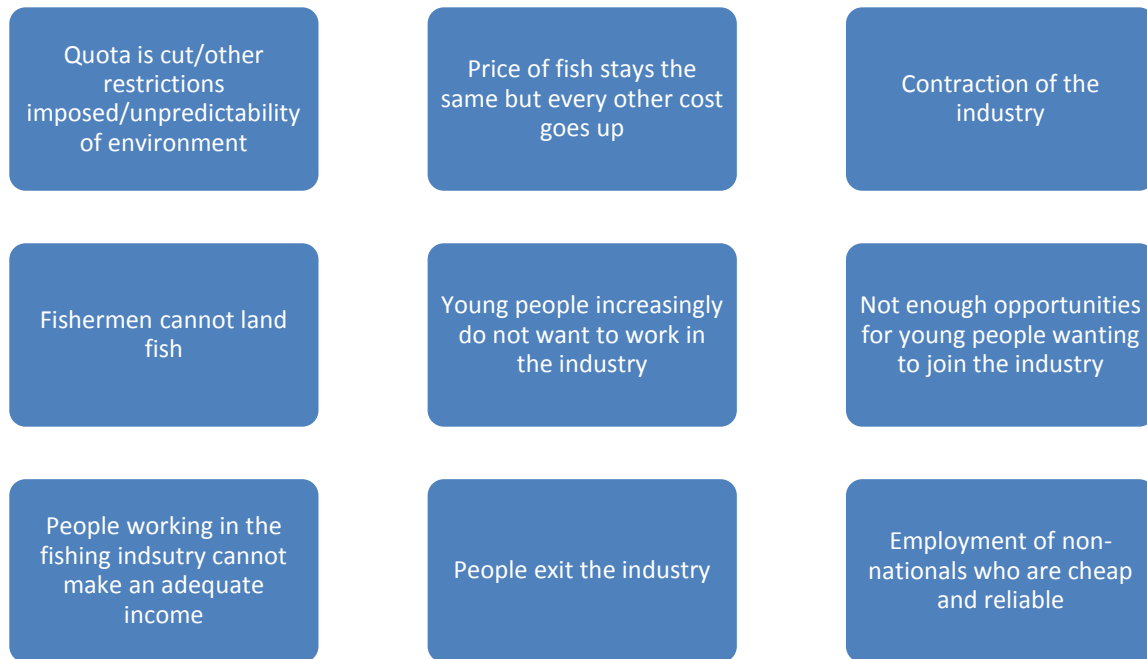
### ***6.3.2 Difficulties with the social renewal of the sector***

Fisheries 'dependency' has been discussed with regards to the importance of an income from fishing for an individual or household, and also for a local economy (Symes, 2000b; Lindkvist, 2000). The research suggests that 'dependency' also relates to the way the occupation of fishing engenders and is dependent on a set of practices that allows the industry and also the wider community to be socially renewed and sustained.

In early discussions with the Scottish Government in 2009 about the social renewal of the fishing industry, several ideas were raised by policy makers that they said required further investigation. These ideas proved to be a useful guide for formulating interview questions for this research. A number of inter-related, but also contradictory points were raised in relation to the social renewal of the sector. These included the imposition of quota and/or other restrictions on the catching sector, together with the unpredictability of the marine environment; people working in the fishing industry being unable to make an adequate income; an increasing number of people exiting the industry; young people increasingly not wanting to work in the industry; the price of fish staying the same whilst other costs go up; a general contraction of the industry; there not being enough opportunities for young people wanting to join the industry; and the employment of non-nationals, who are considered “cheap” and “reliable”. These points are presented in a non-directional, exploratory framework below (see Figure 6.1).

What has emerged from the fieldwork is that the social renewal of the fishing industry is an inherently complex matter and is related to the social renewal of the wider territorial community. Social renewal is not a one-to-one causal or linear relationship. It is more complex than that and what appears to be needed lies more along the lines of the industry and those in the communities working together with policy makers on creating *positive identities*. This is because the evidence points to an intense level of personal commitment involved both in the fishing industry in Scotland and also in living in these remote locations. A devotion and loyalty to the fishing industry emerges as a key characteristic of the communities and crucial for maintaining and sustaining them (see Chapters 3 and 4). For example, the strong emotional bonds that develop through working in the fishing industry – both in the catching and onshore sectors, and which extend to businesses and residents in the wider territorial community - are vital for reinforcing the social networks upon which both the industry and also the wider community depend. Not only those directly employed in the fishing industry, but also those who share a household with those employed, make up close familial social networks that pervade the wider territorial community and speak of a shared commitment to the Scottish fishing industry. Furthermore, shared intergenerational practices that expose people to the sea and boats from an early age play a fundamental role in socialising people into the fishing industry and also in the culture and values of the wider community (see section 3.4.3).

A culture in part entwined with fishing persists within the local communities, revealing a particular way of life that is both informed by and tied to the fishing industry. There is a wider socialisation too into seafaring activities taking place in Scotland's fishing communities: a deep and personal attachment to the sea, felt by many people in the case study areas and which would appear to sustain the industry.



*Figure 6.1. An exploratory framework for thinking about issues affecting the social renewal of the fishing industry*

Intergenerational practices such as spending time on boats from a young age, use of a distinctive dialect, sea-based community events and a culture of self-sufficiency all create the social networks that exist in Scottish fishing communities that serve to sustain the fishing industry.

However, these networks that have at their core interpersonal relationships and reciprocity are being undermined by the contraction of the industry, with those most committed surviving but often at the expense of safety and traditional crew structures, threatening future processes of renewal (see section 5.3). Furthermore, fading opportunities within the fishing mean there are more uncertainties surrounding young people continuing to enter the industry, and also retaining young people in the local community. It is perceived that young people are increasingly choosing not to pursue a career in the fishing industry because of having better

and easier opportunities in other sea-faring industries, other trades (oil and gas, renewables etc.) and university. So although many young people are continuing to be socialised into sea-faring jobs, a widely held view is that it is increasingly common for them to be turning to non-fishing work. At the same time, there is the issue of young people being put off entering the fishing industry. One prime reason for young people being put-off is a perceived change in the image of the fisherman. “Bad press” has devalued fishing as a profession in the eyes of the people working in the industry. In addition, there is a sense that ‘environmental’ priorities are hindering opportunities, both within the fishing industry but also in the wider territorial community (see section 5.4.3). Others point to a decrease in earnings. A widespread perception amongst local fishermen is that a job as a fisherman currently is unable to provide an adequate income. Young fishermen cannot buy their own boats or purchase quota because onshore businesses and banks are unwilling to lend them the money. Many blame policy for hindering the social renewal of the fishing, believing it to be pushing out the old and also any up and coming potential.

It is thought that the only way to keep people in coastal communities is to provide local employment. However, alternative employment opportunities in the case study areas, both within and out with the fishing industry, vary. They range from the predominant view in Shetland that there have been decades of appropriate income alternatives to fishing and a proactive approach to attracting young people of working age back to the island, to concerns in the Outer Hebrides over a lack of employment opportunity for the islands generally. Whilst many people feel that their skills are not easily transferable to occupations and contexts outside of fishing others, particularly in Shetland, have shown more openness to diversification.

Chapter 5 highlighted various challenges associated with diversifying into the oil and renewables industries. Harbour tradesmen in Fraserburgh feel that the harbour is not geared up for the oil industry because of its size – it is relatively small compared to that of Peterhead or Aberdeen. Also, whilst Shetlanders have been able to develop their community in recent decades through the money generated from Sullom Voe, the oil industry is not necessarily seen as a long-term solution for the islands. Many people currently working in the fishing industry in Fraserburgh also fear losing the highly specialized skills of the fishing industry for the ‘short-term’ prospects of the oil. However there are mixed responses. Young and less established fishermen are moving to the offshore companies because they see it as a more



secure option. But those who have been in the fishing industry a long time are resisting the oil industry because they see it as a short-term, time-limited resource.

In some instances, particularly in the Outer Hebrides, there is evidence of tourism being used seasonally by fishermen as a useful form of additional employment or supplementary income. However, whilst tourism might be a good alternative or support to the fishing industry in some areas, the reality is that tourism is often not a straightforward alternative for many parts of Scotland in which there is a fishing fleet. Whilst many imagine that fishing harbours are places of interest that could attract tourists, many of the fishing harbours in Scotland are practical working harbours that are poorly equipped to welcome tourists. There is little tourist infrastructure around the harbours and most of the businesses and skill base are set up for the fishing industry rather than hospitality. So whilst tourism is regularly discussed as a possible alternative industry for people living in coastal communities (Symes, 2009), the reality is that in some fishing locations it is not always a viable option.

Regardless of alternative employment opportunities, the evidence suggests that there remains an importance attached to a local fishing industry in the three coastal areas. Even in areas that would seem to have enjoyed relative success securing employment outside of the fishing industry, it is notable that the capital generated through other ventures has often been re-invested back into the local fishing industry, reflecting a wider community commitment to fishing. People in the fishing industry often see themselves as working with a renewable resource and as a result are operating within a long-term mind-set. Whilst many industries have grown and then declined in the communities over the years, fishing has persisted for centuries. It would also seem that many young people are still determined to enter the industry, even though it is difficult.

In this way, despite the majority of people in all three case study areas now working outside of the fishing industry, respondents in all three areas stress the importance of the local fishing industry for the local community. The clearest example must be Shetland's commitment to sustaining its local fishing industry despite the opportunities provided by Sullom Voe. Not only fishing families, but also the community council and development body has prioritised the local fishing fleet in the wider economy. People said "it's always been part of the culture" that there is an intrinsic value to the fishing industry and to working in it. This chimes with notions of well-being or cultural 'dependency' and further exposes the limits to which fisheries 'dependency' can be understood solely in economic terms. An integrated approach

then, as illustrated in Shetland, may be the key to renewing and sustaining the industry and the coastal communities.

Attention is needed then to specific policies for social renewal, such as creating positive occupation and career development choices, the financing of new entrants, and broad-based territorial/sector development building on fisheries and local capacities. The creation of positive identities might involve the fishing industry being widely perceived as a rewarding career, one of 'honour', with the industry and policy working together to create a feeling of confidence amongst people to enter the industry, or stay in it.

### ***6.3.3 The importance of flexible response***

Flexibility has emerged as a feature of resilience and adaptation in fishing communities, and the evidence would suggest that the encouragement of flexible strategies should be a prominent consideration in fisheries policy. One of the main restrictions on flexibility comes from restrictive licensing and quota allocation systems that force fishers into a narrow bracket and limit their ability to sustain different fisheries. Furthermore, the basic tenets of a fishing identity associated with passion, freedom and self-responsibility, come into conflict with policies that reduce those operational flexibilities. There is widespread resentment for rules that are perceived to be made nationally and at a distance, and which restrict local fishing methods that are perceived to be working well. In this way, fisheries policy is blamed for undermining the necessary features of self-sufficiency and flexibility within the industry. Increasing restrictions on fishing gear and methods are frequently cited as preventing inshore fishermen from harvesting local fisheries. There is also a perception amongst people working in the industry that policy rules and regulations are preventing fishermen from planning for the long term. This in turn affects businesses onshore that depend on the catching sector.

It is important to remember the significance of flexible response for the wider territorial community too. Household relations of people working in the fishing industry mirror the patterns of uncertainty, adaptability and spontaneity inherent in the catching sector. In addition, the wider territorial community can be embroiled within routines of uncertainty and demonstrate a particular commitment to the fishing industry. This highlights the need to prioritise the enabling of flexible response and adaptive capacities (as described in section 4.4.1), both within the fishing industry and also within coastal communities. Jentoft (2000) argues that fishermen are enmeshed in "values, norms and knowledge" that determine their behaviour and align them to fishing and more specifically, "that are shared within their

community” (p.54). This supports the findings in this research that suggest that this ‘way of life’ goes out with the fishing industry to the wider community. This research gives shape to the wider community, arguing that it is not only just one wider community, but several different wider communities, understood through ‘place’, ‘sector’, empathy, language, personal experiences and, most significantly, routines of uncertainty and risk.

Designing systems from a local scale upwards, to enable maximum flexible response, so that the sector can respond effectively to risk and uncertainty, needs to become a primary objective. This could begin with an acknowledgement of the social and cultural aspects of ‘dependency’, with policy finding ways to support the strong relationships within the sector. Currently, regulation would appear to narrow freedoms and squeeze out the potential resilience of the communities based around flexible operations. It is important to know how new policy measures will affect fishing communities, and to build in strong fire walls which avoid further reducing the flexibility, adaptability and resilience of the fleet.

#### **6.4 Giving concrete meaning to social objectives in relation to fisheries policy**

Insights that the research has brought to understanding the original cross-cutting themes of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ has implications for fisheries policy and the development of social objectives. But how can the characteristics and key challenges of the fishing communities outlined above be incorporated into decision making? This section addresses the third research question of how to give concrete meaning to social objectives and how to incorporate them into policy. Partly, the solution lies in *what* the policy contains. The *key coordinates* for the social dimensions of fisheries have been highlighted so far in the chapter to include daily routines of risk and uncertainty, strong interpersonal relationships, flexible response, communities of the mind, communities in flux, and contrasting futures. Flexibility, autonomy, adaptability, local knowledge and trust are all responses to daily risk and uncertainty, and speak of the vulnerability but also resilience of the communities. It is also vital to consider the actual *process* of policy making and how aware policy makers are of different perspectives. Incorporating a broader evidence base within policy-making, engagement and communication processes, and how the industry represents itself are all things to consider.

The following section summarises the research findings into three thematic propositions that build on the key coordinates of the social dimensions of fisheries as identified by the research and considers what might be meant by the social objectives of fisheries policy and how they might be given concrete meaning.

1. The Scottish fishing industry, and in many ways Scottish coastal communities, depend on the existence of strong interpersonal relationships, reciprocity and familiarity in order to deal with the inherent risk and uncertainty in their daily lives.

A set of ‘descriptors’ for examining the occupational and social routines of people in the case study areas include established, age-old routines of working round the clock, flexibility and adaptive response. The main solidarities revolve around shared routines characterised by danger and unpredictability. People collectively face danger associated with losing people to the sea, uncertainty and an intense indivisibility of work and home life. Risk and uncertainty are intrinsic features of this way of life and demand flexible and adaptive behaviours. These traditional practices and conditions within fishing communities in Scotland build a picture of the strengths and resilience of both the occupation and the community.

Evidence from Shetland, and also from the Outer Hebrides and Fraserburgh, suggests that not only do many people living in fishing communities have an intimate knowledge of the marine environment, they also have a fierce and invested interest in its health and well-being. People demonstrate a deep emotional attachment to a way of life that is characterised by autonomy, freedom and risk such that fisheries ‘dependency’ revolves around a unique level of personal commitment to the occupation of fishing and its way of life. The intensity of attachment to fishing as a positive identity, and the considerable level of commitment that people give to fishing are important aspects of fisheries ‘dependency’. Trust in business relations, close social networks, shared language and self-sufficiency remain important characteristics of the communities and their resilience.

The valuing of local knowledge, how it is interpreted, and the way it is communicated, has also emerged as an important characteristic of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’. In the last reform of the CFP the IFFM report advocated regionalisation as the way forward for a more sustainable fisheries management because of its potential to enhance stakeholder participation (Scottish Government, 2009a). Insights into successful management at local level is most apparent in Shetland, where community leaders, fisheries representatives and people employed in the industry are working together successfully, despite having different

needs and wants, or belonging to different fisheries organisations. People in Shetland appear to make it their priority to work together, perhaps in part due to a sense of vulnerability that stems from geographical remoteness and a lack of alternatives. Here, a strong sense of dependency on each other is a strength of the community, where it leads to local people playing a practical role in local fisheries management by working together on issues such as quota management and rights of access.

However, whilst devolving control, it will be important to pay attention to issues of communication. Phillipson and Symes (2010) have advocated inshore fisheries management as a good place to begin to review communication structures. By communicating more effectively with the people on the ground, management is better placed to recognise and build on the various local knowledges, and strengths such as reciprocity embedded within the community, for supporting fisheries management and implementation.

Routines of uncertainty and risk characteristic of the fishing industry extend beyond the sector to businesses and social networks in the wider territorial community. Resilience, vulnerability and risk are important features of the wider territorial communities also, where the characteristic features of the fishing industry pervade the social and cultural fabric of the case study areas, highlighting a close connection between the wider community and the fishing industry in coastal areas. This means that any possible effects of fisheries policy will not just affect people working in the industry but other businesses and people in coastal areas.

Community values revolve around self-sufficiency, autonomy and socialisation into seafaring occupations that serve to socially renew the industry (see Chapter 3). However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find people of the right entrepreneurial skill to stay in the industry. Risk is appealing to young people but uncertainty around the future of the industry in general has a debilitating effect. Young people are no longer looking positively at fishing opportunities, and the employment of foreign nationals may not be a long-term solution to social renewal, since foreign workers tend to be there only for the short term in the majority of cases. A greater emphasis is needed on how to ensure the renewal of social capital in the industry, to make the industry attractive to local young people to sustain it. Fishing would appear to be important for local people and supports them to come up with their own solutions, for example, to open fish shops, or take on oil work. As McCarthy argues, "... the goal is not to create alternative commodities directly, but to recognize and increase the possibilities for alternative spaces and relationships of production" (McCarthy, 2006 p.807).

Better support from the inside would appear to generate a more secure local fishing industry, as is demonstrated in Shetland.

Ensuring that policies do not increase or exacerbate the risk and uncertainty inherent in peoples' daily routines and activities in the wider community might be a key social objective for fisheries policy. So supporting a more resilient and adaptive industry, might be about supporting more resilient communities as a result. Berkes (2010), in tying together the concept of resilience with fisheries, says resilience is the answer to living with uncertainty. Thus the flexible strategies of small scale fisheries are classic examples of resilience in response to uncertainty in the fishing sector. Flexibility and adaptability are defining qualities of resilience. It is important then to try and work out what needs to be done or what can be done to improve resilience, and ensure policies do not undermine resilience in communities. For example, social impact assessment for new regulatory proposals might include determining the cost benefit in terms of resilience. This would also include impacts on the renewal of social capital, or local ecological knowledge.

2. People in the case study areas are brought together through a mutual feeling of being marginalised and having to defend themselves against the 'external threats' of policy, science and the wider public. A major consequence of this is a collective defensiveness against the outside world and a sense of an 'us' and a 'them', reinforcing the fishing 'community'.

If science is to underpin sustainable fisheries, then an *awareness* is needed of the perspectives and knowledge of the people impacted by fisheries policy and their increased *participation* in scientific decision-making. This might include involving the fishing industry more in the framing and design of scientific projects and in scientific assessments of the stocks, not just by using their boats. In this way, this research supports Jentoft's (2000) argument that the 'community' needs to be put back into the social-ecological system to better improve fisheries management. Fisheries management must make it a priority to understand the 'community', to take this understanding on board and to let it inform policy decisions.

A key problem in trying to manage fisheries is often a deep rooted misunderstanding between resource managers and the resource users and a failure to make use of local knowledge. At the moment there appears to be a continual standoff between resource users who fail to understand the purpose of policy decisions and decision makers who fail to understand the resource users' concerns. The scientific messages about the state of natural resources are

often not being ‘received’ by those living and working in dependent communities. There is a common pattern where resource managers believe a “scientific message” can speak for itself, that the resource users are a “blank slate” rather than knowledgeable, and that they often do not realise that who is communicating it and how it is communicated is a crucial part of whether or not those receiving the message believe in it or not. It has been demonstrated in other resource dependent communities that a scientific message can be rendered worthless if the group communicating it is not trusted and respected by the resource users (Weeks and Packard, 1997). In light of this, it is important that there is greater and more active involvement and inclusion of communities in the creation and interpretation of evidence to inform future fisheries policy decisions.

If more attention is to be paid to community views, and industry knowledge, greater attention is needed to interacting, and communicating more effectively, with people within fishing communities. At the same time, the fishing industry may itself need to find more effective ways to represent local community views. Responsibility for incorporating social dimensions into fisheries management cannot therefore be laid entirely at the door of policy-makers alone. A willingness from all sides is necessary. In light of this, building trust needs to be a central aim of fisheries policy (see also Glenn et al., 2012). This may require a radical review and overhaul of communication and relations and the development of effective forums for two-way communication. Weeks and Packard (1997) stress that open communication is key to successful resource management. Mediation systems to help scientists, policy officers and stakeholders interact in a way that improves decision making may also be needed. This has been advocated by Garrett et al. (2012) who emphasise the importance of securing appropriate facilitators. As well as building on existing methods of communication and innovation, fisheries policy may also want to take greater advantage of social media, where different views can be expressed, and where conflicts and contradictions can be seen and taken on board.

3. The ‘community’ does not just sit within the fishing industry, but is understood through place, sector, empathy, language and daily routines of uncertainty and risk.

This research has illuminated the complex, contradictory and wide-reaching nature of community making, highlighting the multiplicity of understandings of the fishing ‘community’ in Scotland. There are place-based fishing communities, such as the town of Fraserburgh and the wider group of coastal villages in the area. There are also occupational-

based fishing communities that include people around the whole coastline and beyond. However, the findings expand on place- and occupational-based definitions of fishing ‘community’ to include collective senses of unity, distinction and empathy within the fishing industry and the coastal regions. The ‘community’ does not just sit within the fishing industry but extends in multiple directions, highlighting that there are different lines of solidarity that unite people.

Identifying similarities and differences to others plays a key role in ‘community’ making; the fishing ‘community’ is by nature heterogeneous and contradictory, thus breaking down any rigid understandings of it. The communities are in a state of flux, with many internal contradictions, conflicts and fissures. At the moment ‘community’ and ‘location’ are usually used synonymously when talking about fisheries dependent areas. In other words, there is an over-simplification of a complex system taking place. However concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ are fluid and multiple, and cannot be understood simply through ‘income’, or ‘place’. In one sense the fishing community is a particular occupational community within a larger territorial community. In another sense, both ‘work’ and ‘place’ take a back seat to empathy, history and culture.

The daily routines, practices and meanings of people in fisheries regions in Scotland are significant and understanding them more might help policy makers engage with communities more effectively and better develop and implement policy decisions. The evidence shows that in order to address the diverse needs that arise out of the different solidarities identified, greater flexibility within policies is necessary that does not assume a single sense of ‘fishing community’ but accommodates the complexities within and between Scottish fishing communities. There is no one size fits all rule. Nor should they just think of place, but also occupation, the links between fishing and wider territorial development, and wider social dimensions too.

The fishing ‘community’ involves far more than just the fishing industry. It is enmeshed in wider social, cultural and territorial networks, such that in order to address the needs of the fishing industry, and the people who live close by to it, sectoral and territorial policies need to effectively interweave. Improvements for people in coastal areas of Scotland may therefore require a closer collaboration between different divisions of policy making. Because the communities are complex, and senses of belonging are wide reaching and fluid, it is not a job for fisheries policy alone to help these areas. Fisheries policy and local social and economic



development bodies need to work closely together and combine their work, to reflect the realities and prospects of the fishing ‘community’.

So in terms of elaborating on how social objectives might be developed, one important requirement is for fisheries policy to work hand-in-hand with local development. The Shetland community provides an example of where the fishing sector has been widely integrated economically into the islands by people in the local council and development organisations. Fishing has been at the heart of local council and community decisions in Shetland, and this has broken down the isolation that the industry has suffered from in other places. At a wider level, Axis 4 of the EFF is a highly relevant policy which emphasises the compatibility of new development with the fishing industry’s needs and the importance of adding value to fish production (Budzich-Szukala, 2011). The Axis 4 programme is an obvious place to strengthen objectives to integrate fisheries into wider local economies. However it is also important to consider the extent to which social concerns within fishing communities balance with other objectives, and to consider the extent to which they are brought to bear in the formulation of fisheries and marine policy, or in social impact analysis.

In order to address the diverse needs of communities, greater flexibility within policy is advocated so that it does not assume a single model but accommodates the complexities and differences between Scottish fishing communities. In recognising that local capacity needs are different, there needs to be flexibility within policy to allow for adaptive fishing and also for flexible local development. A next step might be to look at how policy can become more differentiated. One way is to work on greater localisation of fisheries policy such that policies reflect the distinctive needs of the different communities. For example, co-management will look different in different places and contexts. There has already been discussion about how the Scottish Government might support the different needs of Scotland’s coastal fishing communities (Scottish Government, 2010). The creation of Inshore Fisheries Groups (IFGs) has been one attempt to give voice to local community concerns and it will be important to review their success and progress. In discussing the restructuring of the decision making process that might allow social concerns to find greater expression, the IFFM also advocate the ‘regionalisation’ of the CFP.

## 6.5 Summary

This chapter has brought together the research findings to answer the three research questions. In part one, the complex nature of the fishing ‘community’ in Scotland was discussed together with how fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’, when examined with those living in the communities, does not just revolve around living in a particular location or working in a particular industry, but incorporates routines, practices and meanings as well. Relationships, empathy, identity, and future outlooks all inform notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’. Having discussed the key characteristics of the fishing ‘community’ and how people ‘depend’ on fishing, the second part of the chapter highlighted three meta themes concerning the key challenges facing people in the case study areas. The challenges revolve around a disconnect between people living in fishing communities and fisheries management, difficulties of social renewal both within the fishing industry and also within the wider territorial communities, and the importance of flexible strategies for people living and working in rural coastal Scotland.

The final part of the chapter discussed how the nature of the fishing community and the key challenges facing them, or the ‘social’ context of fisheries, can be accommodated into the management process. It is clear that the findings on social and cultural ‘dependency’, and the fishing ‘community’, from this research, taken together with messages from previous research, point towards possible areas for further development in policy. The concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ explored in this research are not easily reducible to ‘place’ or ‘occupation’. Rather, as the data suggest, the development and improvement of Scotland’s fisheries requires sustained cooperation between multiple stakeholders and between people, places and institutions. In giving concrete meaning to social objectives, what they should cover, and how they could be implemented, it is important to consider the importance of positive identities within the sector and social renewal, communication channels and the engagement of the sector, and the pace of change for the communities that will require flexible response. The extent to which people share a sense of conflict and disconnect with the world outside of fishing, including fisheries management, suggests that more attention needs to be given to the current governance processes within fisheries. A key recommendation is for better two way engagement between fishing communities, policy makers and scientists and improved representation within the fishing industry itself. Specifically, a closer examination and revision of the processes of engagement with, and representation of, the fishing communities is advocated. Most importantly, the development

of trust needs to take centre stage. In this way, the 'social' comprises not only understanding the different challenges that exist within the world of fisheries, but also the processes of gaining and sustaining awareness of the different perspectives that exist.

## Chapter 7. Conclusions and recommendations

### 7.1 Introduction

Whilst there have been significant improvements in fisheries policy making, fisheries management has not yet reached its objectives (CEC, 2009a; RSE, 2004) and there continues to be new regulations and lines of inquiry centred on marine conservation and protecting biodiversity (CEC, 2013; Scottish Government, 2013). This research has set out to address an ongoing need within international fisheries management to inform the development of social objectives in fisheries policy. The costs of continually omitting social concerns from management systems, as revealed by this research, include a problem of trust and effective communication between communities, industry bodies, scientists, policy-makers and a wider general public; a breakdown in positive aspiration and identity tied to a life in fishing and wider sources of belonging to place and sector in coastal communities; and difficulties in accessing important flexible operational strategies in response to local economic, social and environmental conditions.

Chapter 1 highlighted deficiencies within fisheries policy and its evidence in respect of social objectives, and went on to explore concepts of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community' as labels through which to examine social issues in fishing communities. The concepts of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community' are inter-related (Clay and Olson, 2008), and useful for understanding the social dimension of fisheries (Nuttall, 2000). Fisheries 'dependency' can be understood in political (Brookfield et al., 2005), economic (Lindkvist, 2000; Symes, 2000b), and socio-cultural terms (Van Ginkel, 2001; Nadel-Klein, 2000), breaking through ideas of income- and employment- dependence only, whilst a review of ideas on community-making extend understandings of the fishing community beyond 'place' or 'occupation' to practices and meanings (Pahl, 2005; Liepins, 2000a; Cohen, 1985), departing from ideas of the fishing community as a singular thing. The research has not sought to explore the views of government scientists, NGOs or policy makers. Instead, it has argued that what is missing from the evidence base currently is an understanding of notions of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community' from the communities themselves. By presenting data concerning the social and cultural conditions facing people in fishing communities the research goes some way to providing the evidence that has so far been missing from fisheries

management. This includes looking at the social state of fisheries in Scotland through the lens of the community residents themselves and the shape of the ‘community’ - a lens which has not yet been used in policy.

An in-depth qualitative case methodology was adopted to access the hitherto opaque social context of fishing resulting from a fisheries policy that relies largely on quantitative data. Case studies allowed an in-depth picture of the social issues affecting communities to emerge. The areas, chosen through locational analysis and also through industry and government discussions, were important fishing areas in Scotland. Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland each account for a significant section of the Scottish fishing industry, and collectively incorporate a breadth of sectors, and a range of coastal issues. They accommodate numerous trades and professions besides the fishing industry, including food and drink processing, tourism, oil and gas, renewables, health care and education. Interviews and participant observation were used in conjunction with one another to lessen the extent to which the research findings would be based on the researcher’s own interpretation and allow the findings to revolve more around what the research participants had to say. The research was developed and undertaken with the benefit of supporting advice and discussion with policy makers at the Scottish Government.

The analytical chapters built a composite picture of fishing and the fishing ‘community’ in Scotland, mixing the responses from the three study areas. The research elicited similar responses irrespective of location, scale differences etc to endorse the generic socio-cultural influence attributable to ‘the fishing’ but also demonstrated differentiation between and within the geographical areas.

## **7.2 Summary of key research findings**

The social and cultural conditions facing the three Scottish coastal fishing areas of Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland suggest that the fishing community, when examined through the eyes of those living close to or working within the industry, can be understood through the themes of ‘daily routines’, ‘communities of the mind’ and ‘inherent contradictions’.

### ***7.2.1 Everyday social and occupational routines***

Living and working in the fishing industry in Scotland involves shared daily routines of risk and uncertainty that include working round the clock and adaptive response. The risk and uncertainty inherent in the industry is mirrored within fishing households, and also by wider local businesses such that, socially and culturally, there is an indivisibility between the sector and the wider community. A key characteristic of the communities is a strong emotional commitment to fishing, a force that brings people together both within the industry but also with people in the wider territorial community. An emotional closeness between people is built on trust, inherent within business relationships, and also within social and family networks. These emotional connections serve to socially renew the industry and the communities. Social renewal is further strengthened by intergenerational practices and socialisation in to sea-faring. People who spend time on boats from a young age often move in to sea-faring jobs as adults, and local dialects and languages help people retain a sense of who they are and their connection to the fishing industry. Furthermore, the communities are populated by people who grew up exposed to the rhythms of the fishing industry that pervaded the wider community. Examples include social events that revolve around fishing or sea-faring and a culture of self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency, seemingly inherent to the case study areas, can be linked to those qualities within the fishing industry of wider contribution. Such qualities tie to positive feelings of autonomy, flexibility, mutual dependence and reciprocity as a way of life.

### ***7.2.2 Shared communities of the mind***

A strong feature of the communities is connection to and empathy with those involved in fishing. Grief and loss are powerful feelings for reinforcing understandings of the fishing community. In addition, a passion for fishing, and a fishing identity tied to freedom and autonomy are inherent characteristics of the community. A positive fishing identity plays an important role in strengthening feelings of togetherness, both for those who work in the fishing industry but also those in the wider territorial community. However there is an erosion of positive identities associated with fishing through various external factors, affecting the social renewal of the sector and leading to a resistance to diversifying away from the industry. People are closing ranks against what is perceived to be the external threats of policy, science and the general public. There is dissatisfaction with policy decisions, whereby policy is seen to be restricting flexibility within the sector. There is an estrangement

from government science, where local knowledge is felt to be ignored and marginalised. There is also grievance with public views that are considered to be aligned with environmental agendas that feel out of touch with the reality of living and working in these coastal areas. A result of this is a shared feeling of defensiveness, which actually serves to strengthen a dependence on fishing and also the notion of the fishing community itself.

### ***7.2.3 Inherent contradictions within communities***

The fishing communities are multiple and dynamic in having a diverse mix of people and occupations. They are not homogeneous in terms of where people are from or what occupation they do. Therefore important features of 'belonging' include the ability to fit in with the local norms and values, to settle into the community for the long-term, and to contribute. These attributes are particularly important where there is a constant movement of people in and out of the case study areas. Those that fit in and settle are crucial for reinforcing senses of 'we' versus 'they'. However within any group there are further notions of 'we' and 'they' that highlight inherent contradictions within the communities. This is particularly so within the fishing industry itself. There are fissures within the fishing industry that revolve around the place of foreign nationals within the labour force, and perceived differences between 'place' and 'sector'. Furthermore, there are contrasting future outlooks that reflect different senses of local capacity and initiative and any efforts to create local employment opportunities often have to compete with young people increasingly choosing to work away. It would seem that incorporating fishing within wider territorial development has proved successful in Shetland for sustaining a local fishing industry and a prosperous local economy, although even here, the people of Shetland feel that they, and their fishing industry, are struggling to keep its head above water.

### **7.3 The social dimensions of fisheries policy**

The key features for policy to focus on to give concrete meaning to social objectives revolve around the shape of the communities themselves and the primary challenges facing the communities. The three challenges facing the communities, as identified by this research, are a disconnect with policy and science, a breaking down of social and cultural processes that serve to socially renew the industry and the communities, and the narrowing of opportunities to practice flexible response. As for the shape of the communities, of major importance is the

nature of the interpersonal relationships and social networks that exist. This is discussed next, followed by a summary of the three main community challenges.

### ***7.3.1 Social relations***

The research has shown that the concept of the fishing community in Scotland is complex and multiple. Understandings of the fishing community are understood through everyday social and occupational routines, and also through shared values and emotions. As well as 'place' and 'occupation', community is understood through feelings of marginalisation and neglect and perceptions of external threat. The inherent contradictions within the communities are clearly exemplified by contrasting views of local capacity and initiative. Fisheries dependency is understood through income dependence on the fishing industry, whether directly through catching fish or indirectly through being in an economic chain with the catching sector. It is also understood socio-culturally through individual and collective identities tied to fishing, and also by world views shaped by the industry such that people from both within and without the industry not only feel tied to fishing but also to people in other fishing communities.

Since the industry operates through strong interpersonal relationships, any claim that fishing is becoming increasingly individualistic and losing community spirit is premature. Close business and familial networks extend beyond the industry to the wider territorial community, creating trust and dependability between people in fishing communities, and despite any technological advances within the fishing fleet, the industry remains dependent on age-old traditions of reciprocity and familiarity. Local knowledge is passed on through informal social networks. Fishermen, then, are fundamentally dependent on relationships with their agents, families, neighbours, crew and suppliers. Associated with such a culture is a wider community sense of self-sufficiency. Geographical isolation plays a role here, together with a general risk and uncertainty in daily life, which leads to a need to get along and contribute. The operation of such relations is a source of resilience in fishing communities, whilst also reflecting the vulnerability of fishing areas. An awareness of the importance of these interpersonal relationships, therefore, is crucial for fisheries management and for the renewal and sustainability of the industry. Severe contractions of the industry put at risk these informal processes of social and knowledge renewal in the communities.

In addition, understandings of the community are informed by senses of loss, grief and empathy tied to a way of life characterised by physical danger, daily risk and uncertainty.



Such feelings reinforce the interpersonal closeness found within the communities, where feelings of loss concerning the shrinking of the industry, as well as lives lost at sea, are felt by those out with the industry as well as those involved. There is a wider territorial empathy for the industry and a collective identity tied to fishing, highlighting a widespread regard for fishing and a socio-cultural importance of fishing that is rarely incorporated into analysis of the 'socio-economic' role of the sector. This sense of connection to fishing from a range of people highlights the importance of shared communities of the mind for understanding and reinforcing the fishing community. An ability to empathise with fishing is also tied to peoples' sense of belonging and identity to a place, but the 'community' is not always place-specific. It can extend around the coastline and beyond to fishing places in other countries. In this way, a connection to and empathy with fishing breaks through place and sector based ideas of the fishing community to more general feelings of 'togetherness'. So the fishing community, whilst informed by practices and routines, is also informed by shared emotions and meanings.

A we/they mentality is evident in defining community identity. Senses of difference can include use of language, or feeling advantaged or disadvantaged to other places or other sectors. 'They' can include policy makers, scientists, environmentalists, the media, the European Commission and the wider public. These differences reveal a multi-layered process that reinforces the idea that community making depends on the ability to identify similarities and differences to others. This psychological process, central to community making (see Cohen, 1985), may present serious dilemma for resolving conflicts within the communities, and also between the sector and the outside world such that what may be required are constructive processes of community making across traditional dividing lines of 'we' and 'they'.

Since communities are in a state of flux, with both inward and outward migration, there is a need for a dynamic and outward looking view of the communities. Dynamic and changing populations mean the ability to fit in, settle and contribute are increasingly important components of community making. Not just the territorial community but also the industry itself is dynamic and changing. Crew structures now tend to come from further afield, although foreign nationals are prevalent in some sectors of the industry more than others, suggesting the industry is undergoing different stages of development, contraction and stability. Contrasting future outlooks between the communities are perceived to be affecting local development, reflecting that there are different levels of local capacity and initiative that

are important to consider. Each community is at a different stage of moving on from a shrinking fishing industry. In some cases there is resistance to doing so, for example in harnessing renewable energy or aquaculture. In other cases, the sector has been integrated into wider local economic development. So the communities will depend on locally tailored approaches to future sectoral and territorial development.

The communities therefore consist of diverse local economies made up of people with different senses of ties to each other and to fishing, pointing to wider notions of the community at work and challenging one simple understanding of community. The evidence moves understandings of community beyond place and occupation to practices, meanings and relationships, and current definitions of community and dependency need to take into account the socio-cultural role of fishing including fishing identities and emotional commitment to fishing. Daily routines and practices, meanings and contradictions are significant and understanding them more might help policy makers engage more effectively with communities and better develop and implement policy decisions. Greater flexibility within understandings of fisheries 'dependency' and 'community' is advocated that does not assume a single sense of the community but accommodates the complexities. Leading on from this, within policy there must be no one size fits all rule: the fishing community is not just about place, or occupation, whilst there are important links between the sector, wider territorial development and wider social and cultural practices and values.

### ***7.3.2 Communication channels***

People in the case study areas are brought together through mutual feelings of powerlessness, marginalisation, and having to defend themselves against the 'external threats' of policy, science and the wider public. A major consequence of this is a collective feeling of defensiveness against the outside world and a feeling of an 'us' and a 'them', reinforcing senses of the fishing 'community'. The social and economic cost of failure of fisheries policy is not only people losing their livelihoods, but also alienation between decision-makers and those who the policy is trying to manage.

Serious problems appear to remain with communication and understanding between policy, science and the communities, and a polarisation of stakeholders. A key feature is a lack of trust from the communities towards policy and science and the wider world, with people losing heart in the rules. Fisheries management vitally depends on trust between the resource harvesters and the policy makers (see Glenn et al., 2012). The dimension of trust or mistrust

between policy makers, scientists and fishing communities remains a critical challenge. This suggests the need for a wholesale review of the governance processes within science, policy and the industry and the means by which the perspectives of the people living within fishing communities are considered. Building trust and social recognition of fishing communities is a key area in which fisheries governance, science, and representation need to focus their energies if further distance is to be avoided between coastal communities and policy. Thus, despite steps that may have already been made, this research advocates ongoing and concerted attention to a reconnection of the key players – those working within the fishing industry, those representing the sector, those working within fisheries science, those working in policy making and, to some extent, the wider public. Feelings of disconnect and powerlessness within the communities calls for further attention to processes and channels for engagement of stakeholders also and the current structure through which fisheries organisations represent local communities.

### ***7.3.3 Creating positive identities***

The intensity of attachment to fishing as a positive identity, and the considerable level of commitment that people give to fishing are important aspects of fisheries ‘dependency’, as are the valuing of local knowledge, how it is interpreted, and the way it is communicated. However, a major theme revolves around young people choosing other options outside of the industry, largely because of being put off the industry by poor financial prospects, hardship, lack of wider support and poor public image of fishing. Understandings of ‘dependency’ relate to the way fishing engenders and is dependent on sets of practices that allow the industry and the wider community to be socially renewed. There is an intense devotion and loyalty to the industry, with personal relationships being fundamental to its operation. The occupation of fishing, and of living in a fishing community, is characterised by feelings of autonomy, freedom and risk, leading to passion and pride in one’s fishing occupation and illustrating that, for many, fishing is a positive source of self-identity. Such a personal commitment to fishing illuminates why many people in the communities feel ill equipped to diversify away from fishing, and suggests that there is a value to fishing for some that is in excess of any market or financial value. Fishermen are not singularly focused on wanting to make money to the extent that they do not care about the resource or make concerted efforts to nurture it. Within policy then there is a need to acknowledge such social and cultural aspects of fisheries ‘dependency’ as outlined above and find ways to support the personal commitment to, and strong relationships within, the industry.

In addition, the research has highlighted a close connection between the wider territorial community and the fishing industry. Whilst the communities are now diverse and people are occupied largely in non-fishing activities, with senses of togetherness and culture tied to activities outside of fishing, fishing nevertheless holds importance for people, with people still identifying individually or collectively with it. Fishing remains a defining feature for peoples' sense of self, their feeling of belonging to a place and their community. Any possible effects of fisheries policy will not just affect people working in the industry but also other businesses and people in coastal areas. It follows, then, that for those trying to understand or manage fisheries, it is important to build in an awareness of the fishing 'community' as not just those who work in the industry but also these who live in the wider territorial community.

Retaining a local fishing industry is an important objective for the communities. Shetland would appear to have enjoyed some success in retaining a strong local industry, by reinvesting money generated from other local industries back in to the sector, through a close integration of local economic development and the sector. How to make the industry more attractive to local young people needs to be emphasised more within policy though. A key theme revolves around the industry and policy working together on the creation of positive identities tied to fishing. This might include the industry being widely perceived as a positive and rewarding career, one of 'honour' rather than 'criminality' and feelings of confidence for people to enter the industry and for those currently working in it. It might be that there are specific policies for social renewal such as creating positive identities tied to fishing, or clearer career development, the financing of new entrants, or broad-based territorial and sector development, building on fisheries and local capacities. Territorial development and sector development need to meet.

#### ***7.3.4 Flexibility***

The encouragement of flexible strategies needs to be a prominent consideration. Flexibility has emerged as a feature of resilience and adaptation in fishing communities in response to a way of life that revolves around risk and uncertainty. Ensuring that policies do not increase or exacerbate the risk and uncertainty inherent in peoples' daily routines and activities should be a key objective, with a focus on supporting a more resilient industry and more resilient communities. Furthermore, the basic tenets of a fishing identity associated with passion, freedom and self-responsibility come into conflict with fisheries policies that reduce

operational flexibilities. There is widespread resentment for rules that are perceived to be made nationally and at a distance and which restrict local fishing methods that are perceived to be working well. So designing systems that enable flexible response so that different sectors can respond effectively to local risks and conditions using local knowledge needs to be a primary objective. Finally, there is also a need to build in strong fire walls that prevent the demise of a particular sector due to fishing restrictions, or that further reduces the flexibility, adaptability and resilience of the fleet.

## **7.4 Recommendations for future research**

### ***7.4.1 Redesign social impact assessments***

It has been argued that policy impact assessments are a key means of bringing attention to social issues where there is currently no social objectives criteria to measure (Symes and Phillipson, 2009). The use of social impact assessments have been advocated for determining existing social conditions in fisheries (Symes, 2009; Delaney, 2008), although current use of SIAs used to determine changes to the CFP tend to consider only employment and earnings when it comes to the ‘social’ of fisheries. The evidence provided by this thesis may be useful to policy makers for informing the future design of social impact analyses, although further research may be required before the narrative-based evidence presented in this research can be turned into specific indicators on an analysis assessment. A starting set of descriptors for these indicators however, and for examining policy impacts on communities, must surely include supporting strong interpersonal relationships, reciprocity and mutual dependence, working round the clock, flexibility and adaptive response, uncertainty, trust in business relations, family networks, and self-sufficiency. These themes illustrate traditional and well established practices and conditions of fishing communities in Scotland, and begin to build a picture of the strengths and resilience of the occupation and community.

### ***7.4.2 Review the science of fisheries management***

An exploration of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ through the lens of community has revealed a polarity between fisheries science and those working in the industry. It has highlighted a case for further research into the governance processes within science to allow the perspectives of the people living within fishing communities, or traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) (Berkes et al., 1998) to be more fully considered. There is a need for

dedicated attention to the fisheries science system, demonstrated by the lack of trust in the science by the industry. Weeks and Packard (1997) suggest that the key to improving natural resource management is to understand more about the failure in communication between resource harvesters and resource managers. Further research attention is needed into the relationship between the fishers, government and EU scientists, since the dynamics between these groups plays a role in communicating the “scientific” messages to resource users.

#### ***7.4.3 Bring social considerations into main policy structure***

The research has found that notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ are useful tools with which to explore the social aspects of fisheries. However, how to integrate the social context of fisheries into policy is not straightforward. Acting on social considerations within policy will call for improved data and evidence. It will be critical then to embrace qualitative as well as quantitative sources. In reviewing the role of evidence in policy development, the UK government’s delivery body for marine matters, the MMO, wants both quantitative and qualitative applied scientists to inform decision-making (MMO, 2009). In particular, the MMO asks for marine scientists and social scientists to feed a central evidence base that recognises the needs and aspirations of local fishing communities. Research is needed in the way that qualitative evidence can be more substantially considered to add quality and breadth to evidence based policy.

#### ***7.4.4 Improve industry representation***

Key requirements to address the significant gap between fishermen on the ground and the representation that they are receiving at decision-making level may include the need for an improvement in the consultation process between different stakeholders in decision making processes and structures, and in how the fishing industry represents itself. Better communication is an issue for the industry to consider as well as policy and an important issue for future research. Within the communities there are plenty of ideas for improving local fisheries management. However, whilst the Scottish fishing industry does have its representative organisations, it is not obvious to local communities how local views are being heard, communicated or taken up. A key challenge for the industry will be to find a way to produce a strong voice for itself that is able to also relate the differences within the industry and between people across diverse fishing communities.

## 7.5 Concluding remark

Jentoft (2000) describes ‘community’ as “the missing link in fisheries management” (p.54), and encourages a focus on the health and well-being of the ‘community’ alongside that of the fish resource:

“Managers would be careful not to damage the social structure and culture of fisheries communities, by fisheries management or any other measure. They would avoid management designs that threaten the social fabric of fisheries communities, designs that make communities disintegrate and become more stratified. Instead managers would adopt designs that would potentially restore and reinforce the solidarity and cultural qualities of fishing communities.”  
(Jentoft, 2000, p.54)

Where this research departs from Jentoft’s ideas is in advocating that cooperation, networks and trust become a central focus amongst all players, not just within the communities. Cooperation, networks and trust need to extend to those who currently sit within science, policy and NGO circles, as well as those in coastal towns and villages. Rather than viewing the messiness of the ‘community’ as a barrier to improving fisheries management, the concept of the fishing ‘community’ as multi-layered and wide-reaching is surely a path to reconnection amongst the key players. Whilst there are clearly cultural differences amongst groups, and opposing sets of values, traditions and understandings, these groups are not black-and-white. An openness to the possibility that those round the table have not only different ways of thinking and doing things, but also similarities, may be a major step forward for developing explicit social objectives in fisheries policy.

The research has presented some of the social issues in fishing communities, identifying the social considerations and parameters that seem to matter to the communities and which should therefore be accounted for. It has not been possible to define precise social objectives. Ultimately this must be a negotiated process at a range of decision making levels, from the international to the local. However, the research has presented an understanding of the ‘social’ context of fisheries based on perceptions from the communities on notions of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ and, in doing so, provided indicators for how the social can be acknowledged or incorporated into fisheries policy. These indicators revolve around interpersonal relationships, communication channels, positive identities and flexibility. In evidencing the social lives of people belonging to the fishing community, then it may be easier for those outside of the communities to understand and connect with them,

and to empathise with them. By evidencing perspectives within fisheries communities it is hoped that there will be more care and attention directed towards them and fisheries in general.

### *Postscript*

Following the recommendations for policy and future research, this final, short, reflexive section explains the personal ‘journey’ I undertook during the PhD. The postscript reflects on the choices made methodologically and those made in terms of the literature and disciplinary traditions in which the work has been situated. It also considers the policy-related and applied aspects of the work, including my relationship to the Scottish Government and various other stakeholders involved in the PhD.

The driving force behind the research was to pay close attention to people in fishing communities, to explore and evidence these peoples’ experiences and to relate the findings and analysis to a wider audience, including those who make policy. The following three questions acted as guiding concerns throughout the research process:

1. How can the research represent the research subjects in the fishing communities?
2. How can the research address the concerns of policy makers in the Scottish Government?
3. How does the research fit into or contribute to academic discourse on fishing communities?

From previous experience with government and industry stakeholders at the Scottish Government I entered into the research with two perceptions: first, that people living and working within fishing communities in Scotland were being misunderstood and under-represented at decision-making level; and second, that there was a stand-off between stakeholders living and working in coastal fishing communities and government decision-makers and outside experts. Furthermore, terms such as fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’, that were being used in decision-making, were being defined without input from those actually living and working within the communities and depended upon being reduced to measurable indicators. Bringing an understanding of the views of those from coastal fishing communities to the decision-making process was a key research task, one I felt would help people to act, or make policies for, the fishing industry and for fishing communities that would be more likely to work. Specifically, the research sought to bring an



‘insider’s’ view to understandings of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’ by evidencing the lives, feelings and experiences of those working within fishing or living within a coastal community. Such perspectives seemed crucial for challenging any existing assumptions about the fishing ‘community’ that were in danger of being misrepresentative but were nonetheless being taken as the ‘norm’.

A qualitative, and largely anthropological, research methodology was used to tackle any over-simplifications that might have been taking place with regards to understandings of the concepts of fisheries ‘dependency’ and ‘community’. Data were collected using in-depth interviews and participant observation with people in coastal fishing communities. Names of interviewees were passed on by contacts at the Scottish Government, industry representatives and community representatives with a remit for fishing. As I was not from a fishing community, these initial contacts were crucial to the success of the research, providing an essential stepping stone for me to enter into the communities. It was important to have personal contacts and local support in order to be given opportunities to talk to the community, mix with the community and capture sensitive data regarding peoples’ lives within the community. The data revolved around intensely personal and emotionally challenging issues, often laden with pain, grief, loss, anger, suspicion and defensiveness on the part of the respondents. Capturing how people were feeling demanded a high level of trust, compassion, negotiation and empathy. As such, I was driven to honour the research subjects in the case study areas who gave their time, trust and invaluable insight. This meant gaining consent to record interviews, explaining that I was researching the fishing ‘community’ and fisheries ‘dependency’ from the community’s point of view for wider audiences, explaining my history at the Scottish Government, and keeping all interviews confidential. When publishing, I have continued to send draft copies to interviewees, giving them the chance to challenge my arguments or interpretation of the data before publication. Participant observation was used to provide evidence from a wider sample than that available from the interviewees alone. A crucial part of the research was to explore the shape of the coastal communities and the role of fishing within it, which demanded contact with those living and working within the communities. I wanted to reach all corners of the ‘community’, both fishing and non-fishing, to make an assessment of the wider coastal community and fishing’s role within the wider coastal community.

It is inevitable within research that the evidence is designed and determined by the researcher, who makes interpretations about their data and uses judgements about what the

data is saying. Thus the evidence presented sits within the confines of my own interpretations of the data and design of the research. Coming from a postgraduate background in environmental sustainability I empathised with environmental understandings of the situation within fisheries. As a policy officer prior to embarking on the research I also empathised with the concerns of the policy officials at the Scottish Government. During the research I spent time in remote fishing communities, developing an intimate knowledge of local peoples' lives and routines. However, I deliberately chose not to go on fishing trips or get involved in the routines or occupations of the research subjects. Experiencing such activities would have given me an outsider's sense of them which is not what the research was designed to capture. Furthermore, I did not want to hinder the activities of those already struggling with numerous demands. Instead I tried to capture the feelings and experiences of the community and of fishing from the people in the communities themselves. Thus whilst the design and structure of the thesis has been determined by my own analysis, the specific arguments are supported by direct quotations from the interview transcripts. Furthermore, I used content analysis to capture those arguments arising from the research subjects' own thoughts and feelings, and combined this with thematic analysis, using thoughts and concepts within current policy and research agendas, to maintain the relevance to those audiences outwith the fishing communities.

The objective of the research was to inform a range of people, both within and outwith academia, including industry representatives, people living and working in coastal fishing communities, and policy makers. I was strongly influenced by policy thinking at the Scottish Government at the start of the research and I was not a member of any of the multiple and various fishing 'communities' that were investigated. The choice of case study areas was heavily influenced by government and industry representatives, not only to give me easy access into the communities, but also to keep these audiences on board with the research. Fraserburgh, the Outer Hebrides and Shetland were all places already recognised within fisheries management that could provide a broad framing for the evidence. As well as being geographically diverse, they also represented different 'community' contexts, to incorporate mainland and island settings, the inshore and offshore sectors, single sector and mixed sector communities, and the catching sector as well as onshore businesses. I chose not to frame the research within broad social or political geography theory because of a sense of a resistance to meta-theory outside the context of academia, particularly from the target audiences of the research, whose livelihoods for the most part revolved around practice and pragmatism. A

theory-oriented piece of research risked losing the target audiences. Instead those themes already familiar to decision-makers and civil society, such as ‘community’, ‘dependency’ and ‘identity’, and that related to existing social science within the context of fishing in Scotland, were obvious choices for beginning to explore the issues at hand.

The data collection and design of the thesis were shaped using extreme sensitivity towards my different audiences. In order to address the concerns of policy makers I held regular meetings throughout the research with Scottish Government officials, including ex-colleagues with an ‘inshore’ or ‘communities’ remit. The monthly meetings were used to keep up to date with Scottish Government priorities, thoughts, motivations, understandings and agendas. I also had monthly meetings with a policy analyst to inform the Scottish Government about the research, the research process, and the use of qualitative evidence in government policy. I was particularly keen to keep the research relevant to policy-makers at the Scottish Government as I wanted the thesis to be useful to individual officials and to the Scottish Government. For example, in the final few months of the research, some resistance to the nature of the findings became apparent, and officials suggested ‘it’s just what someone has said, it’s not reliable, or evidence, because it does not involve numbers’. At this point I explained that despite the evidence being in narrative form it was useful for the Scottish Government because it provided evidence of the complexity surrounding those issues that are currently being addressed, at a social cost, through quantitative evidence, thus challenging existing ways of thinking about evidence.

A PhD in many ways is an apprenticeship; an opportunity to learn about the craft, skill and profession of academia. Initially I did not understand how the research might fit into, or contribute to, academic discourse on fishing communities. However I used supervision meetings, conferences and academic contacts to explore this. Aware that I was a human geographer by training through my undergraduate degree, I realised by the end of the PhD that I had developed a keen interest in emotional geography and ‘community’ studies within social and political geography. I was ambivalent about being an academic when I began the research. However my reluctance to subscribe to a particular group has been vital for the research. It has been important for me to not be captured by a particular audience, as the research intends to speak to many. Reflecting back over the research process to determine who the audience was and why I made the decisions I made will hopefully be a useful process for those undertaking fisheries- or policy-related PhD work in the future, as well as to fisheries policy-makers and of course people living within fishing communities.

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