

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Urban and Rural Development
Unit of Environmental Communication

Fisherwomen: changing meanings, changing norms, changing policies?

Sara Holmgren

Practice and Thesis Work in Environmental Communication
and Management, 15 ECTS
Spring 2008

Abstract

As a consequence of the failure of the CFP (European Common Fisheries Policy) to achieve its objectives there is today an ongoing debate on the future and the restructuring of Swedish and European fisheries. This thesis explores the social process of the CFP (European Common Fisheries Policy) and the role of women's organising in fisheries management. By passive participatory observations at a Hearing, initiated by the Swedish minister of Agriculture in April 2008, different lines of argumentation among participating actors are distinguished and some of the dominating discursive frameworks are discerned. The second part of the thesis is based on a case study and further investigates what happens when a group of organised women enters the policy process and as a consequence challenge the dominating discursive frameworks of the CFP. The theories used to understand the results are based on communication and gender theories and the findings shows that the institutional framework of CFP is preserving destructive practices since it is built on opposition where opposing actors are sharing certain sets of intersubjective meanings. When women enter the scene different power relations, such as men's privileges as norm makers, are revealed. The fisherwomen thereby not only challenge the meaning of the sexes, they challenge the meaning of fish/er/ies since the whole organisation of CFP is built around fish as a resource, landed by fishermen.

Keywords: CFP, discourse, gender, fisheries, social interaction.

1 Introduction	4
1.1 The Hearing	4
1.2 Fisherwomen	4
1.3 Aim.....	5
1.4 Disposition	5
2. Theoretical and methodological framework for understanding and facilitating collective action	6
2.1 Humans as social beings	6
2.2. Methodology in theory and practice.....	6
2.3 Some definitions.....	7
Part I.....	8
3 Hearing on the future of CFP	8
3.1 A discursive concept	8
3.2 Methodology	8
3.3 Context	9
4. Discursive argumentation.....	10
5. Concluding discussion.....	18
Part II.....	19
4 The Fisherwomen network in Gotland.....	19
4.1 The network and its context	19
4.2 Nordic Network of Coastal and Fisherwomen	20
4.3 Theoretical points of departure	20
4.4 Methodology	21
4.5 Fisherwomen – An interpretation.....	22
4.5 Conclusions	35
5 Overall conclusions	36
6 References	38
Appendix	39

1 Introduction

This thesis explores how discursive frameworks restrict our room for action and what happens when people choose to cross the borders of the dominating frameworks. The paper is divided into two separate parts; The Hearing and Fisherwomen. The background, results and interpretations are described separately. However, occasionally the two parts become interlinked in the text, and by the end of the paper they are brought together in a concluding discussion.

1.1 *The Hearing*

As a consequence of the failure of the CFP (European Common Fisheries Policy) to achieve its objectives there is today an ongoing debate on the future and the restructuring of Swedish and European fisheries. When it comes to the concept of sustainability within CFP, there are no clear guidelines either from politicians or from the administration on how the economic, ecological, and social aspects should be balanced. (Precisering av begreppet hållbart nyttjande för fiskesektorn, 2007-12-21 p.10, Fiskeriverket) Sustainable development can be seen as a process that includes actions and changes according to desirable conditions in the social, economic, and ecological spheres that each society decide upon. The definitions of desirable conditions are in turn constructed in social interaction and ever changeable. Since it from this perspective is in the social interaction that sustainable development is constructed and realised, and some social orders and activities are excluded, the social interaction processes must be subject to debate. (Hallberg & Ljung 2005:70-71) As a result of the experienced problems of CFP the Swedish minister of Agriculture, Eskil Erlandsson, invited affected parties to a Hearing in Stockholm on the 9th of April in order to initiate a discussion on the future of CFP. The first part of this thesis is based on the Hearing, which will be analysed in terms of discursive frameworks discerned in that situation. If perceiving sustainability as a process formed by different discursive frameworks, it becomes interesting to investigate how sustainability is constructed as well as looking at the social situation in which the interaction is taking place. Does the social interaction situation at the Hearing facilitate communication and sharing of perspectives? What perspectives and meanings are possible excluded?

1.2 *Fisherwomen*

Power relations and exercise of power is part of all forms of organisations and human relations, including management of natural resources such as fisheries. Often when discussing the power relations in the management of fisheries, it is in terms of aggregated interest groups such as fishers, scientists, environmental NGOs, and their different possibilities to influence the decision-making and the process as such. Aggregated categories in terms of sex is thus also produced and reproduced in different human relations, also within the fishery sector. On an EU-level the Commission is working to create a better understanding of the situation women are facing, and comparative research has shown that women are facing similar difficulties all over EU although there are no formal hindrances to their participation. ("Kvinnors roll inom fiskenäringen", Mac Allister Elliot and Partners Ltd., Europeiska Kommissionen, generaldirektoratet för fiske). According to the Swedish Board of Fisheries the main problem of the CFP in relation to gender equality is that it is "gender blind". The actors in the fishery sector are considered to have negative attitudes; lack knowledge of the strategic importance; and the overall complexity of the fishery sector is expected to make integration of gender as yet another dimension to consider difficult to motivate.

(Gemensamma fiskeripolitikens jämställdhetseffekter, Fiskeriverket) Does the strategic importance of inclusion of women mean that they have to add something extra in order to participate? And will a reduction of the complexity improve the outcome? Maud Eduards defines resistance as implicit or explicit reproduction of norms and rules, and described as the argumentation of the established order, a power order created in the meeting and negotiations between people in past relations. (Eduards 2002:11-12) Does this imply that the challenges set out above for obtaining a more gender equal fishery sector constitute a defence of the established order? And how is this defence of the established order expressed in social interaction?

Most of the research on gender within fisheries has focused on the labour and spatial division. In general, the research is not up to date and Siri Gerrard (Women in fisheries: Is the concept 'The ground crew' still valid?) mean that the research conducted on women and fisheries in the 1970s and 80s do not regard sex as socially constructed. Gerrard stress that women involved in the sector are highly diverse and that there is a need of research relevant to the women involved, as well as a need of systematic knowledge about how national policies take women's knowledge and experiences into account. Women's organising can be seen as a result of, as well as an explicit or implicit critique of the established politics and management and starting out from the resistance is then one way to study and reveal the power order (Eduards 2002:64). Since it is an empirical question of how the gender order works and is (re)constructed, the second part of this thesis is consequently based on a case study, conducted through individual interviews with women in an organised group on Gotland called Fisherwomen.

1.3 Aim

The overall aim of this thesis is to understand how CFP works in relation to the people that are involved in its construction as well as those who are affected by it, or both.

The aim departs from following questions:

What kinds of discourses are discernible at the Hearing on the future of CFP?

How can we understand Fisherwomen, their roles and engagement?

What happened when and since the Fisherwomen organised?

What happens when a group organised as women meets with established stakeholders in the institutional setting of CFP?

My expectations are that I will be able to discern quite obvious differences in the actors' lines of argumentation and how they consequently construct the problem and solutions. Based on my pre-understanding, foremost originating in media reporting I expect to e.g. see clear differences of perceptions among scientists and fishers regarding i.e. reliability in scientific results. When it comes to the results from the second part of the thesis, I expect that women are working in fisheries informally in different ways and that they actively are trying to deconstruct an order that limits their influence and participation in the public sphere.

1.4 Disposition

The thesis is as already described divided into two separate parts, The Hearing of the future of CFP and Fisherwomen. In order to understand the situations different theoretical frames of reference have been used. The common theoretical and methodological framework are however presented before the accounting of the two studies, while the central theoretical

points of departure for each study is described in direct relation to its result. The work methodology and its process are also described in direct relation to each study result. The conclusions from the two parts are eventually brought together in a concluding discussion

2. Theoretical and methodological framework for understanding and facilitating collective action

2.1 Humans as social beings

As a frame of reference for both the understanding of the Hearing, the Fisherwomen case study, as well as collective actions in general; there are some central ideas about humans as social beings. Social means inter-human awareness and humans are to be considered as thoroughly social since we would not become what we perceive as humans if we did not interact with other human beings. It is in the meeting with others that we come to see ourselves as individuals, develop a self, and are defined by others. Our social reality is created through interaction and to present what we see and agree upon we use symbols, our interactions are symbolic. As we are exposed to stimuli we act back on ourselves by discussing, reflecting, holding back and commanding action. In the interaction process we constantly interpret each other's actions and redefine our reality. It is in the interaction that we learn new perspectives. The way we learn is a social construction since every society has its own knowledge and ways of knowing. Central for learning new perspectives and understanding each other is that we take each other's roles. Viewing the world from someone else's perspective is necessary for co-operation, empathy as well as for manipulation, which imply that there is power involved in social interaction. (Charon 1995:93-102, 55-65, 120-145) So in order to interpret and communicate role taking is crucial but we also need some kind of shared meaning, e.g. common knowledge, norms, assumptions and commitments. We must trust that there is a common ground otherwise we will not communicate or continue communicating. Otherness introduces strangeness in the form of oppositions, disagreements, and different perspectives, evaluations and accounts. The asymmetric perspectives are important for the creativity in social life. (Linell 2007:20-30) Social interaction in a safe environment where the actors trust the situation opens up for exploration of perspectives, and consequently also for learning. Creating safe situations for exploration of asymmetric perspectives and power relations is what I perceive as one of the main objectives for the Environmental Communication perspective as it opens up for creative solutions.

2.2. Methodology in theory and practice

Before the start of the study my experiences from reflexive empirical studies was rather restricted. As the period of the thesis work started I tried to read some literature in the subject but I had difficulties understanding the different concepts and approaches. They simply were too abstract for me to grasp and the theory, methodology, and empiricism kept running into each other. This annoyed me since it was something I was unfamiliar with it. As I now have conducted the studies, interpreted the results, and reflected on the experience the level of abstraction has fallen. The process meant an ongoing swinging to and fro the theory and the material I had at hand. As I asked questions to the material that were based on my present assumptions the interpretations led to new questions and new understandings. The pre-understanding was transformed and I had to return to the theory. I have at some points tried to elucidate this process in my presentations. Simply expressed: I have lived through, or rather

been thrown around, in the hermeneutic circle as I have been working with the thesis. Nevertheless, that is my interpretation of what Alvesson and Sköldbberg describes as hermeneutics, an alternation between: patterns of interpretation, which is theory; the text that is subject to interpretation; dialogue with the text; and interpretation. In the alternating process the pre-understanding is in constant change as the parts are put into overall picture. The hermeneutic circle simply means that the parts can only be understood in relation to the whole, and vice versa.(Alvesson & Sköldbberg 1994:170-175)

The interrelation between the whole and its parts implies a dialectical relationship. Dialectics is central within environmental communication and means that different phenomenon constitute as well as are aspects of each other. (Hallberg & Ljung 2005:24) Examples of dialectical relationships will be exemplified in the text.

As I understand it, hermeneutics more or less implies the use of an abductive method. And as my work has been alternating between theory and empiricism in the process of understanding and explaining the results the abductive reasoning has been dominating. According to Alvesson & Skölberg (1994:45) abductive methodology can be seen as an hermeneutic spiral where the interpretation of facts is based on the pre-understanding of the very same facts.

In conclusion, the experiencing of the hermeneutic circle and the coming across of dialectical relationships have given me a new understanding by the use of the abductive methodology.

2.3 Some definitions

In this thesis I have made some choices when it comes to what meaning I put to some words. First of all when I talk about women and men as social constructions I use the term sex and gender synonymously. The reason is in part practical since the literature I refer to uses both terms. Although the conception of gender aims at the socially constructed characteristics of women and men, the term has been watered out and foremost applied to women. The term sex is thus also problematic since it often relates to biological characteristics, which might result in deterministic reasoning. (Eduards 2002:9) Since I sometimes myself have come to refer to gender as women I try to use the term sex just in order to not get stuck and mix things up.

When it comes to fish, fishers, fisheries, fishery sector etc I have not made any division in different categories of practices. The exception is however the practices that came out from the material e.g. small-scale and large-scale fisheries. I do not know the definition of any of these practices since they are not in focus of my study. I am however aware of the diversity of the sector and by not defining it can become more diverse i.e. by including Fisherwomen who I do not think fit into any of the categories.

The term institution is referred to as both formal and informal rules and structures that govern people's behaviour.

Part I

3 Hearing on the future of CFP

Before the result section I will here present the ideas and methods that guided the first part of the thesis.

3.1 A discursive concept

The concept of discourse tries to depict that humans are living and experiencing within discourses in the sense that it provides a driving force for thought and interaction. It thereby entails boundaries that limits what can be experienced or what meaning that can be put to the experience. This means that some thoughts and acts can be considered as more or less legitimate depending on whether they are expressed within the discursive framework or outside. Discourses runs parallel and can be competing and closed towards each other or have rather open boundaries in-between. (Purvis & Hunt 1993:485-492) A discourse can be seen as an overall pattern of speaking, writing, or other symbolic action that results from multiple sources. It functions to circulate coherent sets of meanings (Cox 2006:58) and every discourse formation is characterised by diffusion, choice, opposition and division. (Purvis & Hunt 1993:485-492)

3.2 Methodology

As I was present at the meeting the methodology used to conduct this study were passive participatory observations. As it was a Hearing in a Hall there was only room for interaction with other participants in the breaks. I thus talked to a few people and asked them about how they perceived the presentations, and they all gave a rather uniform picture. It was therefore difficult for me to just on the basis of my notes, discern the different sets of meaning that were present. As the Hearing was filmed it gave the opportunity to relive the day which was necessary for my analysis. Staying focused a whole day is more than I am capable of so I looked at the recordings and took notes of what I found interesting, different, similar or remarkable. The next step was to interpret and discern the discursive frameworks, which I did by reading notes and recalling the day, the impressions, and feelings. Although it was one aspect that complicated the process, I got really stuck on the problem description. For some reason I had decided to depart from problem and solution descriptions, which is rather interesting as such. What is just as interesting is how long I struggled with it; the procedure took a lot of time and energy until I finally realised that I had to leave it. This process is further described in the result section along with what I ended up with instead. The discernible discursive frameworks that I interpreted out from the lived and relived experience are presented combined with quotations from the actors. Since the Hearing was public there is no reason for covering identities so all actors are named as well as the group of actors that they represented.

In order to understand the communicative situation I was in, and better describe it to those not present I used the idea of seeing the environmental communicative situation as a play, as described by Hallgren & Ljung (2005:29). It implies that in order to describe a situation you need to be able to express action, scene, actors, instruments used for performing the action, and the purpose. So the social situation of the Hearing is described accordingly. Since the setting was as will be illustrated, the observations are restricted to merely acts of speaking.

3.3 Context

The problematic situation in and around our seas has gained more and more attention the past few years. The fishing industry has been debated in the media and the CFP, which regulates European fisheries, have been defined as a great failure. As a member of the European Union, Sweden is submitted to the CFP, which restricts the national freedom to some extent when it comes to fishery directions/regulations and other measurements. On the 9th of April the Swedish minister of Agriculture, Eskil Erlandsson, invited affected parties to a Hearing in order to initiate a discussion on the future of CFP. This means that it was he, or his administrators, that set the frames of the Hearing when it comes to e.g. content, speakers, invited parties, and design.

The social situation

The Hearing took place at Rosenbads conference centre, it gathered around 100 people and was very traditional and formal. I entered the hall a few minutes late together with a teacher of mine and took a seat at the very back, as the front rows were full, just as the minister of agriculture was opening the hearing. The lecture hall and the concrete design of the hearing; a podium including microphones, speakers chair, power point, and speakers on a podium in front of an auditory, did not exactly contribute to a dialogue nor the discussion that the minister had issued. (Why invite to a hearing and not a democratic conversation?) The Hearing was also filmed by Swedish Television, which in turn did not help to create a relaxed atmosphere or open up for spontaneous contributions to discussion. Each time anyone from the auditory had questions the microphone had to be used, and the moderator was keen to assure that people spoke up and held the microphone right so the recording would be of good quality. Most likely this had discouraging effects also on people familiar with this kind of settings. I do not know how the invitation was designed or who was to be considered as affected parties and thereby invited. But in order to get into the hall you had to be on a participant list, so there was obviously no room for spontaneous participation.

The program of the Hearing consisted of speeches held by what I suppose is to be considered as high level representatives of central stakeholder groups. Nearly each and every one of the representatives started their presentations by describing their (formal) experiences and knowledge as substantial, most likely to increase their credibility. The representatives were: Fokian Fotiadis and Paul Dengbold, from GD for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs; Axel Wennblad GD Swedish Board of Fisheries; Henrik Svenberg SFR (National Association of Commercial Fishers, Sweden); Lasse Gustafsson Secretary General WWF; Hugo Andersson Chairman North Sea RAC¹; Reine Johansson Chairman Baltic Sea RAC; and Michael Sissenwine Marine Science Consultant (also chairman in ICES). The day ended with a panel debate where Izabella Lövin, Journalist and author of the book “Silent Sea”, joined in. She expressed that she wanted to represent consumers’ interests and was not given the opportunity to do a presentation as the other representatives. Her ideas was consequently brought forward only in the panel debate.

¹ A RAC is a Regional Advisory Council that prepare recommendations and proposals to the European Commission on matters concerning fisheries management. There are seven RACs in Europe established to cover respectively regions and fisheries. See www.fiskeriverket.se

My impression is thus that the auditory just like the speakers at the podium, the majority men in jackets, were representatives from different interest groups and public administrations. Many of them had probably met before, and several most likely knew each other quite well. When it comes to more abstract structures that might have formed the situation the speakers, who are subjected to my study, most likely have established roles from past interaction situations that they carried with them to this Hearing. There might be norms, implicit or explicit, on what is accepted to say when it comes to e.g. critics of each others standpoints, what issues are considered as relevant and legitimate ideas, and what actors are to be considered as legitimate. Overall the language used was technical, and my interpretation is that it was assumed that everyone in the hall was familiar with this kind of language. As an EC student with a background in social science, I thus from time to time had some problems following the speakers.

As I recall the day and re-interpret the situation, I have realised how it affected me in different ways. Besides the obvious unfamiliarity with such formal arrangements, I was not comfortable in expressing my interest when people I talked to during the breaks asked whom I was, what I did, and why I was at the hearing. Most likely this feeling originated in the focus that the representatives had in their presentations, which I had difficulties to relate to. During the first coffee break, one man working at the Swedish Board of Fisheries more or less started out by saying that CFP should be reduced to covering only the ecological dimension, a comment which was based on a question that one of the speakers brought forward. Implicitly I interpreted it as if the social dimension, in which I place some of my study interests e.g. communication and asymmetric power relations, was considered as irrelevant. As the conversation continued I realised that he interpreted the social dimension as equal to economic support to fishers. I did however not give him my perspective, and we never came to fully understand each other since I never revealed my perspective. When he heard about my studies in EC, he explicitly said that the problem in fisheries was the lack of communication between fishers and scientists. His argumentation all of a sudden turned into inconsistency because what is then the interaction taking place between scientists and fishers if not social? What happens if fishery policies include only ecological aspects? How are the ecological policies going to be implemented if not by people interacting? And will they interact if it implies economic costs for them as individuals? Then we end up in a dialectical discussion saying that a too narrow focus on one part will hide others, and consequently the whole will be lost. (see e.g. Hallberg & Ljung s.30)

4. Discursive argumentation

My reflections and interpretation of the results run parallel in the text and the main conclusions will be presented further in the coming section. The result is divided into topics generated out from the most legible discursive perspectives that I could discern.

Reducing complexity

My first impression at the Hearing was that it was characterised by unanimity among the invited actors, that there was a shared meaning of the problem. In general the problem description contained aspects of overfishing; over capacity in the European fishing fleet; poor economic performance; illegal fisheries; bycatches etc. But when I went through the material afterwards at home I got confused. Discerning the different problem constructions in the given presentations was not as easy as expected, and I had troubles to separate the problem from its causes and effects. Some actors described the problems of CFP as something that I perceived as the outcome, others took the analysis further and described the causes for a CFP

failure as the problem. After a lot of struggle I realised that I might not be the only one having these problems. The actors themselves were not all so clear on what was the problem, causes, effects, and the definitions consequences for solution building. It was obvious that by focusing on one aspect in the material, the problem, I deviated from the basic dialectical idea as well as lost focus from what can be considered as more relevant – the solutions. After putting a lot of time and energy on problem definitions among the actors, I realised the matter of course - it was not very constructive for me or for them. The general problem focus at the Hearing thus meant that they never really discussed the issue of the day, which simply was the future of CFP. My struggle with causes and effects and the actors' failure to focus on future solutions can be seen as typical examples on common ways of handling complex issues. Simplifying and reducing the complexity to cause and effect relations can however create more problems than it solves and have us dealing with symptoms, or even worse, with non-existing problems. If we construct the world as simple, we tend to take actions that are simplified. (see Hallberg & Ljung, p.75-76) My great effort can thus represent how strong the norms on causal relationships are, after one study year with complexity as a mantra, the first thing I ironically do is trying to reduce the presentations at the Hearing to causes and effects.

Construction of the issue and intersubjective meaning

I left the struggle and moved on building on patterns, contradictions and vagueness instead of cause and effect relations. By not separating problem and solution construction among each actor when going through the material I found two general ways of portraying the issue that were not so unanimous. The first pattern that emerged described the issue as systemic, suggesting changes in the institutional framework of CFP and addressing a broad approach when attacking the problem. The second pattern was more focused on specific parts in present framework that could be solved if everyone just followed the agreements. E.g. illegal fisheries, which could be solved by increased control measurement and tougher punishments.

The feeling of a shared problem description was expressed by several of the actors as a positive development. Fokion Fotiadis expressed it as "Sweden is one of the few member states where the public debates on the reform of CFP is very advanced and there is a common perception within the political, NGO and the industry world that something has to be changed". Lasse Gustafsson also points to the special circumstances in Sweden when saying that "...We are more agreed here than in the rest of Europe, which give us unique possibilities but also responsibilities that we have to manage commonly." Also the fishing industry emphasises the importance of shared views. According to Svenberg "It is essential for continued co-operation that you have an unanimous view on the situation in the seas." Paul Dengbold expressed the shared problem description as originating in a wider acceptance of scientific results due to increased stakeholder interaction: "But actually when these meetings are taking place between scientists, environmental NGOs, and the industry it is not so much about challenging the science. I think the problem is more about what to do about it". As Dengbold, Izabella Lövin moves on to question on what to do about the problem "I am actually happily surprised. It is such a unanimous picture from all sides, from Brussels, science, fishing industry and the green organisations. So now I simply feel that it is time to do something. The only question is what?"

Since Dengbold presented the Commission's internal evaluation of CFP in the beginning of the Hearing, the results came to influence the content of following presentations to some extent. Dengbold constructs the CFP failure as systemic and presents underlying irrational mechanisms in the institutional framework that causes overall irrational performance and lack

of will among politicians, industry and member states. “Everybody is locked into their roles in an iron cage of rationality which has become irrational. Rational behaviour within an irrational system leads to overall irrational performance”. Sissenwine is also focusing on underlying causes for lack of will and presents suggestions on enablers of political will, and addresses the need of a broader approach referring to ecological, social and economic consequences of the collapse of the cod stocks outside New Foundland. “So I guess my point is that before one comes to any decision on relatively singular type solutions I think one has to make fairly complex analysis taking into consideration lots of contingencies about all sorts of anticipated outcomes that might occur. I don’t know whether it would have been done differently in New Foundland if people would have known the outcome or not, but they clearly had not analysed it in advance”. Axel Wennblad is also advocating a broader way of attacking the problems and addresses the need of new forms of management and longer-term biological and socio-economic consultations. Interesting to note is that Wennblad more than once during his presentation say that he is probably out on “tunn is” and “farlig mark”, which in direct translation is “thin ice” and “dangerous ground”. It is said when he his giving his view on management principles and forms of decision making. Does this mean that his ideas are controversial, for whom? His final comment in his presentation is “DG Fish has now become DG Maritime, management of sea resources in other words, and maybe that is something for Sweden to imitate. Think of the heading: a new sea department from the government”. This can be interpreted as if Wennblad is not very satisfied with the situation, and that he expects his perspective to be received as controversial. Maybe he is taking the opportunity to present his view publicly now when the minister of agriculture has opened up for dialogue and thereby has to listen. Putting pressure on Swedish politicians to achieve organisational changes might be Wennblad’s tacit agenda.

Both Dengbold and Sissenwine can be categorised as scientists; do they have any implicit interests in presenting the complexity of the issue? Sissenwine is beside his chairmanship in ICES a marine consultant and have possible interests in a broad problem description since it might increase his chances of getting jobs as an consultant when broader spectra of impact and their interrelations has to be examined. It might also increase the funding for ICES, the demand of research, as well as use of their scientific results strengthening their reputation. Dengbold is scientific adviser at DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs and might have similar interests as Sissenwine. The report addresses broad and far-reaching changes, short as well as long term, and there will most likely be a demand of advises if suggested solutions are accepted as the way to proceed. So if looking at it cynical the two of them have assured their future career in terms of job. On the other hand, Dengbold’s advises seem to be quite controversial, which not necessarily assures a career. So in the end, they might as well just perform their jobs and follow their beliefs based on their understanding of the issue.

The second general way of perceiving problems and solutions that I distinguish in the material is the view that a following of existing rules will lead to an achievement of the CFP objectives. These actors thus not further discuss why people do not apply with the rules or do not use more efficient technique. In comparison to Dengbold and Sissenwine’s rather complex and systemic problem description, Lasse Gustafsson is overall very concrete, illustrative and also personal in his presentation, which can be considered as strategic for the environmental movement who sells messages to a wider public and consequently adjust their ways of expressing accordingly. “We do not have a simple picture but there is a tendency to make this technical and very difficult. But let us state that there is too little fish in the sea in relation to the number of boats and the number of fellows that tries to make a living out of it... So stop the illegal fisheries, we know how to do it, you know how to do it Axel, catch them and

punish the violators... There is only one way to get hold of pirates, that is to hurt them economically.” In addition, Gustafsson obviously perceives fishers as exclusively men. Reine Johansson refers to what he thinks were the strengths in Gustafsson's speech and says: "Now is the time to deliver, it is not as many here have said today that The Baltic Sea is a systems failure... If you overfish you commit a crime and that is something we have to do something about." BS RAC has according to Johansson put more than 75 % of its work on illegal fisheries, so with that background it is understandable if Johansson as a chairman in BS RAC emphasises this problem and sees it as a solution. He might perceive a continuous systematic illegal fishery as a personal defeat and consequently see his position as threatened.

Also Eskil Erlandsson is presenting the issue in more concrete terms, although open for interpretations. "... When we act we have to act out from the political realities in the European Union, anything else will be bound to fail." This can be interpreted as if Erlandsson does not believe that the institutional framework is possible to change, or as Lasse Gustafsson interpreted him: "With all respect minister, it is not the political realities that we have to consider first of all, which of course is important. There are actually the ecological realities that decide whether we can fish or not."

When it comes to priorities Erlandsson is focused: "The first thing that I think the Swedish government should contribute to is that we also in the future get a hold of the illegal fisheries that has been carried out and which have made the annual agreements totally meaningless." This statement is interesting in other aspects as well. If Erlandsson and the Swedish government already have decided what issues to put most effort in and that the actions taken have to be taken out from political realities on an EU-level, how open and creative can the dialogue become that Erlandsson issues? Is not the room of action already set and how does it affect other stakeholders' willingness to participate? What can Erlandsson's interests in this issue actually be? Representing a party that originates in farmers' movement and traditionally has much of its support in rural areas, he might feel obligated to protect commercial fisheries and local communities that still are dependent on the industry, which he also explicitly says is important for him. Besides the ideological side, staying on an excellent footing with the industry can be a way to safeguard votes for next election. Bringing the topic up for discussion can also be seen as a response to a growing public awareness and pressure and another way to build trust among the public and win potential votes. He might also have personal incentives to raise the issue, striving for becoming a name in fisheries on higher levels.

One thing that all actors agreed upon was that action has to be taken on an ecosystem level since fish is a mobile resource. What was differing a bit was thus how positive they responded to suggestions on delegation and regionalisation of implementation. Denbold referred to the present system as paternalistic causing perverted technologies and fishing practices resulting in non-achievement of social, ecological, and economic objectives. Henrik Svenberg describes regionalisation as important for the industry and politics in terms of contact with the localities and a sense of responsibility. According to Erlandsson "In discussions we often tend to think from a Swedish perspective and look for solutions from a Swedish perspective. But it is not sure that such solutions are suitable for the whole EU and in order to influence it is consequently important to start from a European perspective." This comment is in opposition to what most other people have referred to as a problematic, that is the centralised decision making that does not take contextual differences into consideration.

Are they then the actors really as unanimous as it may seem? Is it positive or destructive to agree on that CFP is a failure, while the perceptions of why and what needs to be changed are so different? Intersubjectivity implies e.g. some common knowledge, norms, assumptions and commitments. Trusting that there is some common ground is a precondition for communicating or for keeping on communicating and asymmetries in perspectives is important for the creativity in social life. (Linell 2007:20-30) Can it be that the actors have constructed CFP as a problem on the basis of common assumptions and norms, although the perspectives on solutions are differing in, order to have a common ground for further communication? In that case these asymmetric perspectives can be considered to constitute a good base for creative solution building.

Sustainable development

The other pattern that I found when going through the material was different perceptions of the objectives in the concept of sustainable development. In opening the meeting Erlandsson declared that he wants a use of fish resources that is economical, social and ecological sustainable. When the moderator in the panel debate ask Erlandsson of his view on a 3-year stop in cod fishing, the minister's ranking of the objectives becomes explicit. "Well, this is why I proceed cautiously, there are always these adjustments between biodiversity and the possibilities for an industry to continue develop or survive..."

A stop on cod fishing is according to Erlandsson socially impossible since it would be the end of the industry. Dengbold who ends his presentation with questions for discussion further brings up the concept of sustainability. One of them is: "Should CFP take care of all objectives? Since there has been a systematic overfishing you can actually see that the social and economic outcomes are poor, and the basic reason is we have not paid enough attention to the ecological sustainability. Maybe there is a hierarchy out there?" His question is relevant for the overall discussion, but there is an inconsistency in his statement. Dengbold first describes it as a dialectical relationship, social and economic outcomes are poor due to lack of attention to the ecological objectives. However, my question is: if Dengbold concludes that the social and economic objectives have not been met due to ignorance of ecological objectives, what will then happen to the social and economic dimensions if all focus is put on the ecological objectives? My interpretation is thus that Dengbold implicitly ranked the objectives by posing the question, the highest priority should be given to ecological objectives. Than we are back at the dialectical discussion saying that a too narrow focus on one part will hide other, and consequently the whole will be lost.(see e.g. Hallberg & Ljung s.30)

Svenberg's answer to Dengbold's question is straightforward: "...so, my answer to Dengbold's question whether the fisheries policy in the future only will deal with ecology is no. There are people and businesses that should work and therefore social and economic questions to consider." He is clear on his priority of objectives, representing the industry his interests depart from fishers and their economy. Axel Wennblad on the other hand builds on Dengbolds question and requests a balance between the objectives, although it might take time. "We have a good ecological evaluation, but what is happening socio-economically? We have no balance in the data when it comes to socio-economical effects, social and regional effects, and than we expects that the politicians will guess what the situation is like. I think a balance is needed, it should be structured in the same way... It has to be raised to a parallel level, I think it will help in the end process."

Sissenwine is also addressing a broad analysis of all objectives. "I think we have analysed stocks and stock trajectories. I do not think we do very well in terms of analysing the economics beyond the short term obvious results of just reducing catch or the social and cultural impacts". My interpretation of Sissenwine's comment is that there has within fisheries been a focus on science in terms of biology and ecology, while social and economic research has been less developed. Sissenwine is also critical to the lack of specificity and priority of the objectives: "e.g. sustainable social conditions? Priority over Fish works vs. consumers? ...It is weak guidelines since they are so general, what is sustainable?" Sissenwine here poses a crucial question that no one else had brought up during the day.

Sissenwine's questions in combination with a chat I had during the first coffee break made me reflect on my own priorities and foremost definitions. In the coffee line a person working at the Swedish Board of Fisheries more or less started a conversation with me by saying that CFP should be reduced to covering only ecological objectives, which was based on Dengbold's question. I interpreted it as if the social dimension, in which I place some of my study interests e.g. asymmetric power relations, was considered as irrelevant by this person. I was a bit confused and saw his statement as a questioning of my values and felt reluctant to share my perspective, which I immediately started to question myself. As the conversation continued I understood that he interpreted the social dimension as economic support to fishers. When recalling the situation it makes me wonder how the other actors subject to my study would have defined the different objectives of sustainable development more specific. They never actually did so, and the social situation did not open up for exploring any perspectives. Further, when I told about my studies in EC, the same person explicitly said that the problem with fisheries was the lack of communication between fishers and scientists. Then I realised the inconsistency in his argumentation and an overall tendency: to put one self on the outside, turning sustainability to something distant, not here and now. Because what is communication if not social interaction? How are the ecological policies going to be implemented if not by people interacting? And will people participate and interact if it implies economic costs for them as individuals?

Science as knowledge

The third pattern that I observed was the confidence in science and scientific results. What first brought my attention to this was Lasse Gustafsson's comment that: "Our definite opinion is that the best way to get to know how the ecosystem works is by conducting natural science. It is not perfect but it is the best we have and there we should not depart." Besides the question of priority of the objectives that I brought up under previous heading, which in Gustafsson's and WWF's case naturally are ecological, the statement touches upon a hierarchy of knowledge. Does it mean that science is the only knowledge that is relevant? Dengbold's understanding of the impact of scientific evidence is that "there is a much larger accepting of the figures from the scientists than if you go ten years back. You may not believe that because you still got a lot of discussions in the public where it is challenged." Is challenging science always something negative? Does not requests for knowing more imply a development, which results in more research, turning science into a process? The challenge might thus be when scientific uncertainty is used as argument for hindering decisions and actions because they may not be in line with ones interests. I interpret Izabella Lövin's statement as referring to this dilemma. "The discussion in Sweden has been whether the science is reliable or not. Since the scientists are financed by common means and it is a common resource I simply cannot understand how the industry can question it."

Izabella then brings up the time aspects since it for some fish species is necessary with urgent measurements, she poses the following question. "Can't the EU Commission take over the responsibility where you introduce a system where scientists and public authorities are given the task to administrate the situation so we can have sustainable stocks in the long run?"

Does such a governance system produce any sense of responsibility among those who are expected to follow the decisions? Michael Sissenwine brings up the issue with science and means that science has to do more than just giving good data and stresses i.e. the need of transparency, co-operative research, and interactive communication. Sissenwine also poses the very important question: "is science governance an issue? Science in the ecological world is a very important element in forming public decisions".

Perceiving science as a process means that we will never be absolute sure, decisions and actions have to be taken even though there is uncertainty. Several of the arguments of the given by the actors are consequently inconsistent from this perspective. They stress the importance of acting now, with measurements taken based on natural science, yet it seems like the problem is not lack of scientific results. Many of the actors instead described CFP failure as if it had something to do with irresponsibility, law infringements, lack of will, and several also stressed the importance of co-operation and dialogue. Yet, still they talk of science, natural science. Why is that?

Dialogue and co-operation

A clear contradiction was the to be found within the perceived need of dialogue, co-operation, and communication among the actors and their further suggestions on solutions.

Dengbold illustrated the consequences of dialogue: "But actually when these meeting are taking place between scientists, environmental NGOs and the industry it is no so much about challenging the science. There has been an enormous development during the last five years in the interaction and the dialogue that is taking place. I think today the problem is more about what to do about it and the short term perspective, how heavy costs are we prepared to carry in the short term." Still, Dengbold do not seem to very much prioritise social interaction when he puts up questions for discussion after his presentation. Once again sustainability becomes something distant. Hugo Andersson also raises the importance of dialogue between stakeholders and refers to his experiences from RAC: "It is important with the close cooperation and it is important that we can have a dialogue between the scientists and the actors in the RACs. It is of course also important for the scientists to take part so the advises handed over to the Commission have good quality." Hugo Andersson thus never describes why it is important, a tendency that he shares with other actors.

There are some more obvious examples of contradictions when actors describe communication and dialogue as important factors but exclude them from being part of the solutions. E.g. Reine Johansson describes issues crucial for trust building, which in turn is a pre condition for 'efficient' communication, as irrelevant. In the same moment he also describes communication as information transfer, or transfer of scientific results, not as something created when people are interacting. "I am sure that you are right those of you here who have said that the debate here in Sweden is important. But I am also sure that there are many irrelevant questions brought up in Sweden, such as who controls who, the industry's influence etc."

”When it comes to science and management plans and all that it sounds very nice when you say that it the science that applies but here we have a long way to go. It is not the scientific advice as such that we have difficulties following, but we have a long way to go when it comes to explaining this extremely complicated material for lay for ordinary people.” It could be interpreted as a one-way process where the true knowledge should be handed over to the ordinary people. What about their knowledge: is it not lost in such a situation? Is it not considered to be of any use?

Also Lasse Gustafsson falls into this contradicting way of reasoning when he talks about what I interpret as an increased intersubjectivity among the actors. ”If it is a result of an increased understanding of the problems or if there is more insight, or if it is just new people in new positions, is not really interesting. Somewhere here there is an opening and I think that the dialogues we have had back and forth between different stakeholders the last few years have been of great importance.”

Gustafsson seem to perceive the dialogues as significant, but the factors that might improve the possibilities for creating intersubjective meaning does not appear to be considered as important. He also raises the issue of rights by acknowledging the lack of rights of his colleagues in other European countries when saying the following. ”When it comes to the common policies it is important to take into consideration that we are the exception in Europe, my colleagues in France and Spain are threatened with violence each time they insists on their rights to participate in RAC.” Besides the power issue that Johansson perceived as irrelevant for the discussion in Sweden, Gustafsson touches upon the issue of trust, which from an environmental communication perspective is to be seen as a prerequisite for constructive dialogues. Yet, again the connections between communication and solution building are overlooked.

Fish – a resource

The final issue I have discerned is the strong norm that fish is for human production or consumption. Izabella Lövin is the only actor who raises something that can be interpreted as if fish has intrinsic values. ”It is neither possible to economically compensate for entire species that are risking to become extinct. In the whole, it is important to remember when you discuss this issue that it is commonly owned natural resources, it is also nature... It is these kinds of values that we are gambling with, not money. And as far as I know are humans not threatened by extinction even though the commercial fisheries sometime consider themselves as a particular species. But it is actually animals and nature that we are talking about here.”

Fish are named raw material, a resource, and source of protein. The term food, which I relate more direct to our survival, is hardly mentioned. Lasse Gustafsson on the other hand raises another ethical issue in addition to the intrinsic value, the European exploitation of waters outside the West African coast. ”We also have the third country agreements that I am surprised that no one have mentioned here today. That is, the fishing rights agreements that EU and individual countries enter with countries outside EU in order to fish increases poverty and the protein scarcity. By CFP we create starvation and malnutrition.”

Neither Lövin or Gustafsson had any responses on these remarks. Instead the debate, or the presentations, revolved around more technical issues such as TACs, quotas, subsidies etc. What does this mean? Are questions of rights and ethics not legitimate in this setting? Is reducing the complexity to questions of fishing fleets, mesh sizes, and cod stocks, a desirable

ground to build solutions on? Who benefits from such perspectives, what practices are safeguarded, and what authority of groups and institutions are preserved?

5. Concluding discussion

When it comes to different ways of arguing around solutions there are two parallel discourses, one that to some extent embrace a broader approach and one that focus on simple solutions. A broader approach implies that the institutional framework as such has to be reconsidered while the more narrow implies what I perceive as business as usual, the actors positions within the institutional setting is safeguarded while they in the former discourse can be perceived as challenged.

When it comes to sustainability the reductionism thinking becomes rather clear. There is only one actor that addresses a broad and overarching understanding. Then we have the “green” line of argumentation that advocates ecology, and the industry advocating economy with some social characteristics. In general, the social dimension is what I consider as missing. At least it is undefined and seem to be interpreted as socio-economics, e.g. conditions for small enterprises. So, ecology and economy is dominating the discursive framework of sustainability.

The dominating discourse in terms of knowledge is that science is equal to knowledge, and scientific results will lead to good solutions. Yet there is an discernible alternative that more attention should be paid to the fishermen’s knowledge.

The science as knowledge discourse effects another discursive argumentation, that of dialogue and co-operation. The meaning of dialogue and co-operation is a bit vague but I interpret it as the transfer of scientific results to the lay people. It is a one-way act and do not contain the elements that is considered as preconditions for concerted action from an environmental communicative perspective.

The final discourse is the overall dominating one. That is that fish is a resource for human use and that the fish has an intrinsic value is illegitimate. The whole setting is based on that fish is a resource for human use and all actors are dependent on this discursive framework so consequently they all have an interest in safeguarding the norm.

My overall conclusion of these discursive frameworks is that almost all of them works to safeguard the CFP as a formal and informal institution. With this I mean that the actors present at the Hearing constitute CFP. They are part of its organisational structure, policies, regulation etc as well as the establishment of the prevailing norms and consequently the discourses works to safeguard the system and positions. The organisational structure works to polarise the actors and in order to keep their positions the actors reconstruct this polarising. They are who they are in relation to each other and the relations build on opposition. It also seems like the system is characterised by distrust so the asymmetric perspectives are not really made use of from a learning point of view. Consequently the solutions are not very constructive. However, the initiative and the agreement that something has to be changed is one step. Which of the two parallel discursive frameworks, one advocating complexity and one simplicity, that will stand strongest is going to be interesting to see. The question is, what happens if new actors enters the scene? The meeting between Nordic Network and Coastal Women and BS RAC is treated in the end of part two.

Part II

4 The Fisherwomen network in Gotland

Inshore small-scale fisheries have historically been dominating on Gotland and the commercial fisheries have had high economic value but is now in a crisis, mainly due to the declining cod stocks. Most of the catches are sent to the mainland for further refinement, marketing and selling. There is a need of finding new solutions for securing incomes, e.g. using alternative fishing tools and fishing other species. (Regional och lokal samförvaltning av fiske, Fiskeriverket, jan 2007)

4.1 *The network and its context*

Officially the Fisherwomen network in Gotland started in a small scale in the year 2000. The official background was the negative trends and in an attempt to change the development it was considered as important to engage women, as well as men, and take advantage of their competencies and thereby contribute to increased employment and improved economy within fisheries. Since fisheries is a dangerous occupation the safety work is of great importance. The families/women are often considered as having an important function in this work. With point of departure in safety issues and alternative prospects of fisheries, two women: one working with safety education for fishers, and one working with tanning and dressing fish skin, were invited as speakers to Fisheries Day (Fiskets dag)². Later the same year the first step to create a contact group among fisherwomen, i.e. wives/partners to fishers or women involved in fisheries in any other way. During the following year discussion meetings on e.g. safety issues, cooking gatherings where fish dishes based on more uncommon species and movie nights were held. Due to lack of knowledge of the working conditions at sea, and more interest shown in tanning and dressing fish skin, the latter was what the Fisherwomen network came to focus upon. In 2002 the network received support from EU, NUTEK and the County Administrative Board in order to start a project on developing fish leather products. The Fish Leather Project (“Fiskskinnsprojektet”) ran between the years 2002-2005 and included courses in tanning and dressing fish skin, marketing, product development, and needle work as well as study tours. Since 2005 Fisherwomen Gotland are a member of the Nordic Coastal and Fisherwomen, and representatives for the Nordic Coastal and Fisherwomen in the Baltic Sea RAC³. Besides the Fish Leather Project Fisherwomen Gotland has participated in conferences arranged on EU and Nordic level. (Information sheet, interview person)

The women who were part of the starting process seem to still be engaged while some of the women who participated in the project left when the project ended. Now the association consists of around six people whom meet up from time to time to work with the fish leather. When I use the term Fisherwomen I aim at the women as an organised group that includes the time for the network, project and the association.

² “Fisheries Day” aims to highlight the business and the surrounding activities. Is arranged by by different actors in collaboration.

³ The BS RAC is one of seven Regional Advisory Councils established by the European Council to increase stakeholder involvement in the development of a successful Common Fisheries Policy. The other RACs are for the Mediterranean Sea, the North Sea, North western waters, South-western waters, Pelagic stocks and High seas/long distance fleet. See www.bsrac.org

4.2 Nordic Network of Coastal and Fisherwomen

Nordic Fisherwomen is an umbrella organisation for associations of women involved in fishing and related marine sources of livelihood in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Faeroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland Islands. Nordic Fisherwomen strive at: promoting the organisational activity of women involved in fishing and other marine sources of livelihood; promoting equality in fishing and related sources of livelihood; improving women's possibilities to develop themselves and work in the coastal regions; improving the social and economic security for families dependent on fisheries; increase fishermen's competence in safety issues at sea; and promote environmental issues and sustainable usage of natural resources. (Leaflet, Nordic Network of Coastal and Fisherwomen).

The network get together when they can but there is a general lack of money. They are seeking new forms of co-operation and been appointed onto the Baltic Sea RAC since 2005. They want to work on the socio-economic issues but have no funding and the network is facing problems getting women to participate due to family commitments and low income. The Swedish government has recently agreed aid to women's organisation to increase participation in democratic processes, but Fisherwomen's organisation is not considered eligible. (Information sheet, interview person)

4.3 Theoretical points of departure

In this section I describe my preunderstanding that have influenced my aim, questions, and interpretations as well as my interaction with the women subject to my study to some extent. I also describe the theoretical perspectives that were generated in the meantime or after the empiricism were worked at, which I needed to better understand my results. During my work with this thesis it has become more obvious to me how naturalised the ideas on sexual differences are, and I have become more aware on my own reproduction of these ideas. Yet, I am sure there are several examples of situations in the text when I have been unsuccessful in questioning the prevailing norms. My preunderstanding in combination with the theoretical angles used for understanding the results opens up for other subjective interpretations and consequently for arrivals at other conclusions.

Previous research

To get a better understanding of the subject I looked through some previous research that to some extent came to influence my choice of questions and working process. Most of the research on gender within fisheries has focused on the labour and spatial division. E.g. Thompson (1985) describes in a study over Scottish communities the fishery as an occupation where men are highly dependent on the work of women ashore. Yet the sexual division of labour does not result in equal social positions. When it comes to the relation between ecological, economic and social interdependencies, Davis (1993) shows how the depletion of cod stock in Newfoundland has resulted in transformation and renegotiating of traditional divisions of labour, village space, identities, and the meaning of femininity and masculinity. In a study from Norrbotten, Maria Udén (2004) discusses the dependency between the sexes and also speculates in possible gender transformations where women become key persons in new processing and sales strategies and in the development of new products. However, according to Udén women's social positions and possibilities to influence will thus be dependent on whether their roles are formalised, and official in terms of employment, ownership and positions.

Power and sex as a social construction

My point of departure before I started working with this study was that our identities are constructed in the interaction with others, and it still is. A social construction is possible to deconstruct, and it is these assumptions that have influenced my work during the whole process. E.g. when it comes to perceptions, interpretations and most likely also the interaction with interview persons.

The idea to study women departed from Eduards (2002). One way to study power is to study women's organising, which can be seen as a result of as well as an explicit or implicit critique of the established politics and management. If women act as a group in order to assure their interests they risk to confirm the sexual categories they want to deconstruct, which is a central paradox. Women acting collectively are thus very active and their organising can be seen as a reaction against a given democratic order, and their collective action can create counteracts in terms of resistance. Eduards define resistance as reproduction of norms and rules, and described as the argumentation of the established order, a power order created in the meeting and negotiations between people in past relations. The more explicit formulations against women's collective action the easier to do interpretations on which democratic principles that are defended. The defence can thus also be interpreted as silence or rejection without explanations. (Eduards 2002:11-12) As I interpreted the results I went back to this literature to search for help to understand my results.

4.4 Methodology

The choice of case study has two explanations. First, in the process of finding a topic for this thesis I got a suggested focus on small-scale fisheries on Gotland from a supervisor. Second, as I was exploring the topic I fell over a webpage presenting the Fisherwomen. Due to my interest in gender relations and power issues I decided to focus on women within fisheries since I was curious about their situation. Fisherwomen is also the only active women's organisation within fisheries in Sweden that I have found, so the choice was easy. I emailed the contact person for the association, and it took some time before it was confirmed whether it was possible to get in contact with the persons involved. Meantime I was waiting for response I studied the literature, now afterwards I have realised that it was too much of that. It blocked me up.

Before I had my first appointment with the contact person of the association I did not know much at all. I did not know how active they were, how many members, or how many it was possible to get in contact with etc. Most of the Fisherwomen are no longer "real" Fisherwomen since their husbands have given up fishing and some are no longer active in the association. So the interviews are foremost based on retrospection and reinterpretations of past experiences. I have not made any separation of their experiences in terms of time or level of engagement. The result is simply an aggregate of my interpretations of their statements of past experiences, present situation and future outlooks.

The interview process

However, before my first appointment I constructed an interview guide with the topics: Fisherwomen, gender equality, fisheries, participation/representation/influence, politics, and the future. Under each topic I had specific questions in case I would loose focus during the interviews. The guide was thus not used very much, in part because I let the women direct the conversation and if the topics were not answered I asked questions. There is however another reason. I had by this time already conducted the observation study at the Hearing so the topics

were to some extent influenced and adjusted to fit into that part. This was a mistake. I realised that already after my first interview and you can say that I fell into the discursive frameworks that I had set out to study before conducting the interviews. It was obvious that that woman did not feel comfortable answering those questions. In general I interpret as if they thought they were not knowledgeable enough and some because they had no interest so the answers became very short and the flow in the conversation ended. And when I asked about their definition of gender equality, my feeling was almost as they felt accused. If reinterpreting this feeling can it be that it was considered as illegitimate? It was almost as if the word startled them. Now I wished I had explored it a bit more but I think I was a bit scared that my personal beliefs would make them say that they thought I wanted to hear.

In general the conversations were very problem oriented and I had difficulties bringing out positive aspects that could generate brighter future outlooks and work as a base for solution building. (See Peter De Jong & Insoo Kim Berg 2008) I got the feeling that some of the women had a great need of expressing the frustration they felt over the development, and I do not think they were very familiar with focusing on possibilities. So when those questions on solutions came up the answers were short, and the reoccurring answer on following up questions was 'I do not know' or 'I have not thought about that'. I was not skilful enough nor had enough time to turn the conversations in a more positive direction.

I was by the time of third interview quite frustrated since I did not know how to handle the fact that they did not fit into my pre-set picture. They were not very active, and had no bigger interest of participating in the Establishment and I realised that I more or less underestimated their agency and reconstructed the stereotypes I set out to deconstruct. I felt upset with myself and told myself that it is in the eye in the beholder. Yet I did not know how I would solve it theoretically, I had to go back to the literature after the interviews were finished. So I simply changed strategy and just started out the interview asking about their experiences of being a Fisherwoman, and how they felt about the development. I perceived it as if this was something most of them felt more comfortable doing. It was about that time it became fun.

4.5 Fisherwomen – An interpretation

The results from the seven interviews conducted with six women, who are or have been involved in Fisherwomen, are here presented according to topics that came to dominate the interviews and which are directly or indirectly related to my questions at issue. After each topic the results are discussed. Since the association is not very active today, and most of the women's husbands are no longer fishing, the interviews are a mixture of retrospection and reinterpretations of experiences and situations.

Who is a Fisherwoman and what does it imply being a Fisherwoman?

It seems like there is no uniform definition of who is to be considered as a Fisherwoman. When I asked for criteria for joining the association, one of the interviewees expressed it as "First the criteria was women with interests in fisheries, either if they were married with a fisher, had a fish shop, or had been married to a fisher." "You should have connection to fisheries in one way or the other, it has been a bit loose and vague." My interpretation is thus that most important is your sex, men can not be a Fisherwoman, and you have to be involved in fisheries, which is not further defined. The definitions I was given does not include the actual fishing, does this mean that women can not be fishers? One woman did not immediately reject the idea, but she was an exception: "... I could also consider being a fisher but there is the insecure economy. Since the children were born... Well there is this thing with

children, women have the roles they have and I guess it has been difficult.” Some women also describe prejudices and superstition regarding women and boats in relation to my question on women being fishers. ”I took care of the book keeping for a Danish boat and it took quite some time before I was allowed to come on board, it meant misfortune and bad luck. It was like ‘you take care of the book keeping, I take care of the boat’, that is probably how it was in former days. It was the first and only time I got in contact with it.” Another woman describes it as: ”A woman should not be on board on boats, those old men, it is theirs. But still they have female names on their boats most of the time.” How can such prejudices and superstitious ideas be understood and do they still have implications on the willingness among women and men to cross the borders of the established stereotype roles?

In general I perceive it as the women are taking the job division for granted, which imply that men are doing the fishing and women are on land having an employment and performing the domestic labour. Some women argue that the fishermen’s job is too heavy for women physically, in addition having children seem to imply staying at home, consequently it becomes more or less impossible to be out on the sea. “I do not see why women should be put on such laborious positions because women do not manage in the long run and than it is a bit stupid to do it. I guess there are women working in fish factories for example, it is traditional and I guess that they sit there with low wages gutting fish, packaging etc.” Several women describe the roles as complementary, which imply that the labour division is based on functionality originating in physical capabilities (see e.g. Lövkrona Inger p 31-43), and some descriptions I interpret as if the roles are biologically determined. “I do not think I would manage to leave the children at home and be away from them such long periods. I think it is more difficult for women, it is easier for men somehow.”

All women described their husbands’ jobs as very laborious. After some reflection one woman thus mentioned her own job as hard work: “The times and the drudgery, it is very drudgery, my job is too but it is a bit different anyhow.” None of the women complained over their domestic work. Still they all wished they had more, which I interpret as if they were not completely satisfied with their situation. Being married or partner to a fisher seems to bring also other work besides the domestic. Some women have informally been involved in book keeping and sale. My expectation based on previous research and official documents was that women perform a lot of informal work such as book keeping and administration, this does not seem to be the case here. I few women have helped out, but to what they consider as a minor extent. But my interpretation is that the interviewees see their employment and domestic labour as most significant, in some cases even a precondition for their husbands fishing: ”Even though you do not help him directly with the fishing you do other things so he can carry on fishing so to say. Sometimes we maybe give up quite a lot to let the fisheries take priority over so to say.” In general it seems as if it is the women who make a traditional family life possible. ”I have not been involved in fisheries officially but I have sometimes tried to sell and help out with other things. But it is not as if I have been out fishing on regular basis. I have been responsible for children, food and housing. Well I still do although he is not fishing any longer, very traditional. All shopping, cooking, driving kids, washing, cleaning, and yes, all social contacts.” One woman described the division of labour as ”I pay the bills, the paperwork he takes care of himself.” Other seemed to perceive the strict labour division as simplifying e.g. childcare. “You have to be quite independent as a women in order to be married to a fisher who is gone all weeks and take care of children and family and all that. But I can imagine that if you are not independent enough and do not know what you want than it is probably hard to be married to a fisher. At the same time it is a lot easier, it gets more

troublesome when they come home and intervene. I probably think it has been easier to be on my own.”

Why then do they choose to organise themselves as Fisherwomen? According to one woman’s statement, it was two men involved in fisheries who saw the engagement of women as a way to solve the safety issue. This can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, the engagement of women was not perceived to have an intrinsic value, but used as an instrument. The men were supposed to be reached through their women. Yet, there were some very active women who were interested and whose involvement started at this early stage. “I think it was because I was a bit angry over the lack of safety thinking, that they did not wear life jackets, they did not think of it as I wanted them to. ...I guess the safety issue was kind of the point of departure and that the women could gang up somehow and influence, or find some kind of forum for influence. It is a very slow mannish organisation that is very bound to traditions and of which you can get a bit tired.” So the second possible interpretation seem more accurate, that the need of engaging women is an implicit admittance of the need of renewal and men are the ones obstructing change (Eduards 2002:40). This was before the network was established, but the safety issue was according to my understanding the origin of Fisherwomen. One woman describe the development as “I guess it is all about our fish leather products now, we do not bother about our men any more. Just seeing and talking to each other is nice, we are kind of in the same situation.” Seeing each other, sharing problems and talking to someone who knows ones situation seemed to be what most of the women I talked to valued most. Although aspects of power to influence were by some women expressed as the original idea.

On my question whether it is necessary to organise as women, the answers varied. One woman says that it was just temporary, a way to get the women engaged, but that they eventually would work together with the men. This viewpoint could be interpreted as if the organising function as empowerment. It can also be interpreted less constructive, that sex as a category not is considered as legitimate and that woman’s interests are not an interest for the public (Eduards 2002:62-63). The risk is that the sexless man is preserved as the norm. Others said that it was a way to get out and see people, when the men were out on the sea the women might as well get together and see each other instead of staying at home waiting for the men to come home. One woman describes the organising as something that can be interpreted as a need of space: “It is necessary with separate groups for women, as soon as men are around the conversations will shift to other issues. ... You do not have a voice and especially not when it is their field of work but now we can sit down and talk and maybe dwell on things they would perceive as silly. At least we now get to bring things to its ends.” Again there are two different lines of argumentation; one has to do with affinity as empowerment and the other with power to influence.

It seems like the men are very dependent on their women when it comes to economy, children, social life etc. One woman also points to this asymmetry and says that men with partners are more successful in their work since they have a woman at home, who takes care of the household and the economy. She also mentions other consequences: “They are calmer and have a base so to say. They simply have a safety, someone to come home to. Sometimes, it has been quite like that before that you come home and it is empty and silent and you might resort out and end up drinking. You do not have any social life since it is difficult to get when you are out on the sea.” Another woman expresses it as: “We earn our own living, if we would separate I have my social safety you know.” The picture of the Fisherwoman makes it

almost impossible to ignore the other part in the relation, the fishermen. So how do the Fisherwomen picture the fishermen?

The fishermen - from the perspective of the Fisherwomen

Since much of the interviews came to revolve around the situation for fishers, who are men, the fishermen themselves came to be difficult to exclude although their situation is not included in the thesis as a question at issue. Constantly recurring statements was that “it is a pity about the fishers”, and that “it is tough being a fisher” today, and that the status of the profession must be improved. Suggestions on how the status can be improved were thus missing. It can be interpreted as if Fisherwomen were to some extent reproducing the picture of women as passive by not acting themselves. On the other hand some expressed that they wanted the fishermen to do something else, so why bother? Some of the descriptions given by the women I interpret as passive, the fisher is not constructed as an agent, more as a victim. “There is this with their confidence. It is as I say that they should be a bit prouder of themselves, they are so few, and they are unique. And then they are stuck with this bloody cod; there are other fish... So now they are a bit paralysed, they do not find the way and they do not know what to do. They are a bit sceptical quite so to say; it is not that easy. ...The fishermen do not even have enough sense to sell to the right price.”

Several women are also problemising the low status of the profession as well as that fishers accept bad treatment in a way no other practicians would do. One woman thus describes what she considers to be the causes for the passivity and low self-confidence.

“The sea is not an easy place to be at which imply that you do not get that many intellectuals, readers or writers. ...It leads to that it within the fisheries can be difficult to discuss sensible matters, you do not get anywhere since there is no interest. They are not used to discussing, only the people they look down on do such things since you are so scared of categories and social hierarchies. So it gets difficult when you have organised and talked about trying to develop since you have this tall poppies syndrome and you do not believe in changes, you just see to your own.” The same woman also describes the negative consequences of collective representation of fishers, e.g. in SFR (National Association of Commercial Fisheries). “If you look to the representatives, most of them comes from the West Coast where you have a much greater selection of fishermen since it has generated a lot of money. That also generates more people in terms of intellectuals and I guess it is them that stand up. The ones who climbs up in fishers organisations are those who have connections to the large boats, and work in their interest.”

According to my interpretation of the women’s descriptions, the fisher seem to be a person who is dependant on the partner economically and socially, has a very hard job, lacks intellectual interests, lacks self-confidence, does not see opportunities, do not break norms, and is scared of participating in decision-making although their interests are not really represented. How do these emerging stereotypes correlate and reconstruct each other?

How can we understand the Fisherwoman, her role, and her engagement?

Just the term Fisherwoman indicates what norms and practices that are dominating the scene of which Fisherwomen are a part. Fisherwomen have to label themselves as women as the term fisher, which appears to be neutral, is prescribed to men. The same phenomenon is to be seen in football where the neutral term football belongs to men, who thereby constitute the norm. You do not say men’s football. Women’s football thereby becomes something deviant and the same apply to Fisherwomen. My claim is actually demonstrated at this very moment

as I write as the term Fisherwoman is not accepted by the computer. It wants to replace the term to Fisherman. Also the criteria for membership illustrates the existing norms. To be married or partner to a fisher implies that you cannot be a fisher if you are a woman. By organising themselves as women they thereby visualise the other sex, which constitutes the norm (Eduards 2002:106-107). But by naming themselves *Fisher* women they also may contribute to an expansion of the term fisher, which seem to be restricted to the person (man) who perform the actual catching of the fish. Why do I then raise those linguistic aspects? Symbols are social objects that are used to represent whatever people agree upon and language is a special kind of symbol since it is used to refer to or represent a part of reality. Language and symbols can be seen as guides to our perceptions to what we see, notice, interpret and miss in different situations. Consequently they also affect how we choose to act. (Charon 1995:40-47) If applying these ideas of symbolic interactionism on the old men that equalised women on the harbour to bad luck, but still choose to name their boats in their names, what happens then? Obviously men are/were the ones owning the boats and working on the boats. It is their field of expertise. But their reluctance to women in the harbour can be interpreted as an attempt to preserve something, most likely an order that favoured them. The female names on the boats can also be seen as objectifying women, turning them into something deviant. What is deviant is more difficult to understand and consequently more difficult to co-operate with. It is obvious that the labour division is destructive in many points of views since it separates people and create borders that may seem difficult to challenge. The women are thus part in this reconstruction of stereotypes. They seem to some extent defend their positions as mothers and wives since they have troubles crossing the borders to the mannish field of work. Or are they simply not interested in what they label as hard work? Now they are also the main supporters of the family, trying to make the economy work, and are struggling with gloomy future prospects for their husbands' profession. The asymmetric labour division is exposed in terms of limited room for action outside the home. Still the women choose to organise. Why is that? And by organising as women and furthermore working with traditional womanly issues, such as social and environmental issues and sewing, do they really deconstruct the power order?

In order to understand what I perceived as contradictions, I had to return to the literature since I did not know how to handle the paradox. Eduards (2002) has tried to come around it and my interpretation is that she has succeeded. By acting collectively as women they do not only express a consciousness position themselves and reconstruct what it means being a woman while collectively crossing the borders of passivity often ascribed to women. Implicitly, men as a category also become exposed and consequently their privilege of being an undefined and changeable category comes to an end. They all of a sudden are prescribed a sex and their norms do no longer lacks a reference. Acting collectively also has empowering aspects in the sense that the spirit of togetherness gets a value of its own that can strengthen the political self-esteem. And when it comes to my trouble coming around the reconstruction of stereotypes by engaging in typical womanly work that I mentioned, Eduards gives the obvious explanation. The basic idea is that the interpretations of differences are socially and politically conditioned. We humans are the one who ascribes the differences a value, and in principle we can do the other way around. (Eduards 2002:10-20, 41, 157-158) It is a matter of dominating discourses. The only thing I miss about Eduards perspective is that the success of collective action also is dependent on the social interaction within the collective of women. Besides empowerment, what happens as women meet to act as a group? Does the social interaction within the group and its dynamics influence the interaction with external actors? In that case the work to deconstruction the gender order has to include communication.

The conclusion is that women's organising does not have to be consistent, it can be filled with deconstruction and preservations at the same time and still be empowering and rearranging borders. That is how I interpret and would like to describe Fisherwomen. It is just that there is a relationship, so in order to understand the situation of Fisherwomen and how they perceive themselves we have look at their descriptions of the fishermen.

I interpret these relationships where men are described as paralysed by the women, and the women themselves are to be perceived as agents of change, as aspects of the reconstruction of destructive gender roles. The meaning of being a fisherman, and consequently of what it means being a fisherwoman, is obviously undergoing a process of change in fact the actual existence of a fisherwoman imply change. Women are claiming space in a new way, and since the space is finite, men are consequently subject to change. Yet the process of change is not embraced, it is considered as problematic. The fishers continue fishing despite diminishing numbers of the animals in question, no one really question the consumption of fish as long as it is the right species that is being cooked and served, and finding new fishing practices seem to be a slow process. Eduards (2002:12-14) describes it as the resistance of power. She problemises the term resistance that most often is referred to as the subordinates weapon against the Establishment. Yet, Eduards lifts what is to be considered as non-change, that the term imply a preservation. To resist is to persevere, making sure that it does not get any worse. With this meaning Eduards mean that the term is better suited for the Establishments line of argumentation. In this case the Establishment would refer to established politics and management including all actors treated in part one of this thesis. When some Fisherwomen say that they want the fishermen to give up fishing, do they challenge an order with all that it involves? Does the persevering and the continued fishing, despite the low profitability, imply that the fishermen are resisting the women's agency? Such an interpretation can also be lifted to higher levels, to the Establishment. More or less all actors involved in fisheries wants to maintain the fishing practices although on more sustainable levels and favouring small-scale fisheries is a pronounced political aim. Is this dominating discourse where fishing is perceived as an activity taken for granted and the in fish is reduced to its instrumental value, also to be interpreted as a men's resistance to change. Obviously, the women I interviewed are not favoured by this discourse. Their husbands, the (ex) small-scale fishers, are apparently also suffering. The fishers are evidently not a homogenous category. Is it possible to apply the order between categories based on sex to the order within fisheries where small-scale fishers according to some women are not really represented, and they have trouble communicating their needs? I will end it here, the fishermen are after all not subject to my study.

Issues

There are some issues that are recurring among all women that is being/has been a partner/wife to a fishermen, and which have had implications on their lives as individuals as well as on their organising. The most crucial are: time, difficulties to plan, bad economy, and an insecure future. Having a full time job and at the same time being responsible for children and all domestic labour naturally result in lack of time. According to all women, time is also what restricts their involvement in the association. "It is nice and we inspire each other, and you talk about you should do this and that, but than it comes to nothing when you do not have time to do it... I have a home, house, children to take care of on my own, and it takes time. It is a lot of driving and than there is no time for the fish skins but I do feel that I have learned how to do it, and that remains, so I feel my time for it will come." Another woman no longer involved describes her withdrawal. "As for me, I withdrawn because of time and energy, so I participated two or three years maybe, but it was not always that you were at the meetings."

When it comes to planning, one woman states what she finds most difficult "I guess that what I find the hardest part is the uncertainty, never knowing when they come home, when they leave, and for how long they will be away. That is what I think has been the hardest part of living with a fisher." Some women said their only wish was that their men would give up fishing. "Our everyday life take away a lot from us, most of us are working full time and all that. I guess I have become pessimistic over the years, you simply do not manage. And the fisheries, the prospects seem a bit gloomy so to say. Sometimes I wish they could find something else to do. I do not claim an extraordinary economy or so, but having a steady income and knowing that you will have enough money to pay the bills at the end of the month, that is worth quite a lot so to say. What has been also hard is that you can never plan and count on things such as 'on Saturday you take care of the kids', or so." In general it seems like the lack of time and difficulties to plan have implications on their independence. Although the women are not dependent on their men economically or socially, their possibilities to e.g. engage in activities outside the private sphere are restricted due to their responsibilities.

When it comes to the future the women seem worried of what will happen. They mention loss of knowledge about the surrounding waters, cultural aspects and dying coastal communities, as well as social issues. Several of the women question what will happen to the fishers when they stop since many of them do not know anything else but fishing. The environmental situation in the Baltic and the decreasing fish stocks are causing difficulties recruiting younger fishers, which most women find tragic although they do not want their own children to become fishers, as well it creates problems for those who have made investments. Other factors that results in insecurity are the restrictions and regulation that creates difficulties for small-scale fishing. One woman describes the fear of investing as: "I think we are kind of burned because it has been like that all the time. As soon as you do something and invest it just takes a few months until new decisions are taken, and all you have done can be thrown. Nets can be thrown, hooks can be thrown, because then everything is illegal and you have hundreds of thousands just lying on the quay, not possible to use. Since there has been these kind of decisions all the time, you are burned, and investing is not really an option you know." Another describes the effects on the private life and the relationship: "I have to say that as a Fisherwoman you get extremely tired of everything. You do not manage to care in the end and that is what is wrong of course. Because new are rules coming all the time and the fishers get tired of it and somehow it strikes back at us. They have temperament and it has to be ventured out on someone." The women describe the regulation as short term and not adapted to the local context where small-scale fishing is dominant. Selling smoked fish to tourists in the summer directly from the harbours is no longer an alternative, since following the restrictions would imply too large investments. "They have been talking about it for several years but there are no decisions taken in favour. If they continue talking a few more years there will be no fishers left and then it is too late and the boats are scrapped. The Swedish Board of Fisheries wants to scrap the boats, but the tonnes (allowed catch per boat) are just transferred to bigger boats. Then you have no small-scale fisheries left since no one can afford to buy a new small boat and start over. It has been eradicated this way."

When it comes to the future of the association and the possibilities to influence the development one woman say: "You had dreams of influencing before but I do not know, we are not very strong or active. Then we have Fisherwomen in other countries and they have totally different conditions to fight for, just inheriting a boat, so it is very different and that have made it possible for those women's' organisations to have their voices heard. There you might be able to change something, I guess it is harder here. If the coastal fisheries had been

developed as was talked about a few years ago, and it would not have been left to die, then I think women could have had a role or a voice. But now everything is global, large boats and quotas and it is kind of political.” In general a broader participation in established politics and management does not seem like a possibility since there is no major interest in participating. Some describe the representation in RAC as positive but they do not see themselves as knowledgeable, engaged, or forward enough. The exception is the woman who is described as the driving force by the rest. Supporting her rather than participating oneself seems to be the general viewpoint. Some women relates it to lack of self-confidence others to the fact that many fishers has given up fishing, and since several of the organised Fisherwomen no longer are dependent on fishing as an income they have lost their engagement to some extent. Even though most women are not interested they see a need of participating, as one of them puts it: “When the fisheries have been good life has been good. When it is decreasing and there are many new restrictions coming, now is the time when it is of importance to try to participate and influence.”

When it comes to the environmental situation in the Baltic and the declining fish stocks, most women consider land-based pollution and trawling as the major problems. Several of the women would like to see a ban on trawling in the whole Baltic and are sceptical to what they call industrial fishing. One of the women expresses it as “I think it is too much to have those large trawlers that destroys the sea bed and catches such enormous quantities in such a small Inland Sea.” Several women describe the fishers on the West Coast as ruthless, cleaning the sea with their big trawlers.

Hopes

In general it seems as many of the hopes that existed when the Fisherwomen started in 2000 have been dashed. One of the Fisherwomen thinks that women can play a significant role in fisheries when it comes to refinement and development of new products. Since men are those who are fishing it is assumed that they couldn't do both fishing and refining, it would imply too much work. Some are wishing that there was a receiver that took delivery of the fish and forwarded it out to supermarkets so just the remaining fish was sent to the mainland. The restrictions and regulations are described as if they need to be adjusted to local contexts. According to most women a removal of some restrictions, e.g. on provision handling is something that would create possibilities for a small-scale sale and consequently on the viability of coastal communities, at least during the summer months. The need of advertisement is further considered as a precondition for small-scale fishing, development of new products, and alternative practices. The development of different types of labelling for traceability and ecological sustainability seem to be something the women are welcoming, they think it would favour the small scale fisheries. However, most women are not very optimistic when it comes to such possibilities and taking initiatives to such activities is not something they seem to consider doing themselves.

Most women are still hoping for policies that supports the small-scale fisheries, and suggest bans on trawling in the Baltic that they mean would improve the possibilities for recovering of declining fish stocks. When it comes to the future of Fisherwomen as an organisation there are different perceptions. A few see potentials in terms of possibilities to influence the development within fisheries although the lack of resources constitutes constraints. There are thus some hopes of new EU fundings, but that requires an external project leader. Other are happy as it is, working with the fish skin products is considered as a nice hobby and a reason for seeing each other now and then. However, all women who are still active seem very happy about the existence of the association. They say that if they have more time in the future,

receive some funding, or come up with some ideas that would shorten the tanning process, they might as well be able to develop a smaller-scale production and earn some money.

Issue and hopes, an interpretation

These results show that Fisherwomen's issues are foremost related to the sexual division of labour. Their issues are described as lack of time, difficulties in planning ahead, poor economy, and an insecure future due to short-term regulations and declining fish stocks. The asymmetric labour division restricts women's possibilities to express and formulate their issues, needs and hopes. On domestic level women to a great extent make the fishing possible for their husbands, so here their roles are decisive. But the seamy side is that by doing that they restrict their own room for action. It is a dilemma. Who is then defining Fisherwomen's issues?

My interpretation is that some of the viewpoints given were just reflections of viewpoints coming from somewhere else, tentatively the national fisheries management who have raised women's involvement in e.g. refinement and development of new practices, as a strategic issue. (see e.g. Piriz) I base this interpretation on how the women expressed themselves. Many did not say "us" when they talked about the strategic importance of including women, they said "them". And in general, although there are exceptions, the women did not seem interested in refinement and product development. I perceived it as some women saw it as a field of work belonging to men since they describe men as conservative and not seeing possibilities. That they themselves would take the initiatives is thus not described as an alternative.

The issues that Fisherwomen describes are according to my perception not defined in the public debate that I have taken part of, which is restricted to the Hearing, media reporting, and some reports from the fisheries management. Their lack of time, economic and future worries, feeling of futility when it comes to influencing, wishing that the fishermen would quit, and suggested bans on trawling are not really common features in the public discussion that I have taken part of. Is it because these issues are considered as irrelevant? Are Fisherwomen not considered as legitimate actors when it comes to the established fishery politics and management? As stated in the introduction, all organisations and human relations are under influence of power relations and exercise of power. To reveal and bring those power structures up for discussion can be considered as a central task for Environmental Communication. Power tends to reduce the complexity that is an incentive for learning and creative solutions. (See e.g. Hallberg & Ljung 2005:75-76). Since gender roles are ever changing and the order is situational it becomes necessary to look at specific situations in order to understand how it is (re)constructed and defended. In the following section there are some examples of how the defence of prevailing norms sex can be expressed.

Fisherwomen meets with the established politics and management

In general all women had the impression that people, women and men, were positively inclined to their engagement. There were however some men who seemed sceptical but as the time has passed the fishers has started to be more curious and helpful in searching for skins suitable for tanning. Some women also said that men have become engaged in helping out with practical solutions in order to facilitate the quite demanding tanning and dressing process. My pre-understanding before I started interviewing was that the association was participating in the established institutional framework for fisheries politics and management. However, the participation was not very broad and today one of the active members of the

association is active in RAC. According to the reading I did before conducting the interviews the Fisherwomen had been part of a local advisory group. I do not know how many of the women that were active in this group but I assume that it foremost was the woman described as the driving force in the association since she is the one representing Fisherwomen in RAC. The advisory group nevertheless ceased to exist when the Swedish Board of Fisheries introduced the pilot project “Co-management initiative⁴” in 2004. Fisherwomen were for some reason not part of the Co-management initiative, which I expected due to the underlying democratic ideal of the approach. When I asked about the reasons for not participating on the local level when the group is active on a regional level I had the following answer. “I actually do not know why. I think when the Co-management initiative started the aim was to bring together commercial fishers, recreational- and sport fishers and the scientists. I think that was their focus and that has been successful.” She did not think it had anything to do with their sex, it was simply that the focus was on these groups of actors. Can it be that the competition between established actors in the fisheries management is rigid to the extent that the competition works as an excluding factor for other actors? Are women simply not considered as legitimate actors, or are they threatening the dominating norm by organising, turning almost all people involved in fisheries into men?

When it comes to the participation in BS RAC, the Fisherwomen has not been very well perceived although the development has gone in a positive direction. The participation takes place in the executive committee, which is responsible for the running work. The committee consists of one group with representatives from the fishing industry that possesses 2/3 of the mandates, and one group of other actors (foremost environmental organisations) possessing 1/3 of the mandates. The development in RAC is described as follows. “It has become very good. In the beginning it was kind of, they probably thought that we had no role in fisheries what so ever, that we were women only, and that we had nothing to do there. It was the commercial fishers who supported us and thought that we should participate. They thought we should belong to the 1/3 group, and so did we. But the green organisations did definitely not want us there. I was at the first General Meeting in Copenhagen and it was foremost one of the green organisations that really tried to get rid of me. I was at the same flight but he did not know me by that time, I saw him run up to the chairman of one of the other organisations in the group and started to discuss. I heard everything as I walked beside them and he was trying to convince the chairman to help him out. The chairman obviously took it into consideration since he later in the big meeting when we would constitute ourselves and become members stood up and questioned that Nordic Network of Coastal and Fisherwomen would be part of the 1/3 group. It was the big hall, around 80 people. And then they asked for me to present myself in English but I stood up and said that I was not prepared so I could not do it. Then it was one representative from a fisher organisation that immediately responded and said that they already had discussed it, and it was all settled that I would belong to the 1/3 group but still they tried. It was really terrible I must say, I was so exposed. ...Then it was one guy from the 1/3 group that became really unhappy and found it really embarrassing. He supported me. I have to say that this happening strengthened me. I felt that I had support. But the day after the same man came up to me and told me that he would not give up, he would continue the

⁴ The specific aim is to create economic and biological sustainable fishery where local users have influence on the management of the resource, to reach a global approach on the fishery and the measurements needed. There is a need of finding new solutions for securing incomes, e.g. using alternative fishing tools and fishing other species. Tourism based on fisheries is considered to have a big developing potential. (Regional och lokal samförvaltning av fiske, Fiskeriverket, jan 2007)

struggle against me. ...After that course of events it has been fine, I probably boosted my image and marked where I wanted to belong.”

When I asked for further development of her views and experiences regarding the perceived positive development in RAC she said: “Maybe they have understood that I know some and understand some and that I am not exactly running any women’s issues. That is not why I am sitting there, it is foremost because of the coastal waters, the families and all that. I am not exactly a feminist and that is probably what most people thought, that it was FI⁵ that was coming. But it is possible to deliver anyhow, that you want equal rights.” Still Fisherwomen are systematically excluded in some contexts. The man from the 1/3 group who had supported her finished in RAC. He had invited her to the pre-meetings in which the group agrees on a common ground for discussions in the bigger group. However, when he finished in RAC the invitations ceased. This is what I aim at with systematic exclusion. How is it possible that an ordinary stakeholder group faces such opposition when they meet with the established stakeholders? Is it because they are women? Is it because their participation implies increased competition?

Interpretations of the development

If resistance is interpreted according to Eduards and as I have done previous in the text, the situation at the meeting can be described as characterised by explicit resistance. The woman was questioned in public. The fact that she still is excluded from pre-meetings informally can be interpreted as implicit resistance. That so many people were quiet do tell something about the openness and power structures. Were they agreeing with the chairman who stood up and questioned the Fisherwomen’s participation, or were they reluctant to take stands in the issue, afraid of breaking norms etc? Obviously two men expressed their support for the woman. The one who did it openly was thus in the opposite group to the Fisherwomen while the one who did it directly to the woman was in the same group as Fisherwomen.

What is also important to identify in this situation is how the Fisherwoman actually reconstructed her role, she expressed it as if she positioned herself and she felt strengthened by the support she felt. She was breaking boundaries for what it implies being a woman as well as what the term fisher entails in this setting, some welcomed it while others resisted it strongly and obviously have continued doing so.

The second type of implicit resistance that I want to bring up is her reluctance to run what she calls women’s issues. I interpret her sayings as if she thinks issues of equality are of importance while naming them women’s issues and pointing them out is not considered as legitimate. The same line of argumentation as used before can be applied here. By calling something women’s issues, all other issues implicitly become men’s issues and what has been considered as private issues become public. That would imply that the politics and management more or less would be transformed into a man’s world. And the resistance becomes even stronger than that resulting from being pointed out as a privileged category. After all, there are women working in fisheries in different ways at different levels although they are underrepresented. But do they run women’s issues? Is it a risk that Fisherwomen become assimilated into this “world of men” and lose power to act as women?

According to Eduards (2002:153-158) women are put in front two alternatives as they organise themselves: conflict or co-operation. The latter is what Fisherwomen have chosen; it

⁵ Feminist Initiative, a Swedish political party.

is explicitly the goal presented by some of the interviewees'. From the perspective of Eduards co-operation however bring some dilemmas. Since women are the subordinated category gender equality tend to end up in questions on how women can get the same rights, possibilities, and obligations as men in society. This is to reduce the complexity since more of these rights etc implies restrictions on the spaces ascribed to men. And the room of action is not unlimited. Women cannot have more than men, what would that be? Men's conditions constitute the norm, as Eduards puts it: "There are no words for special benefits for women. According to definition you cannot claim more than the 'whole' wage." When women organise as women they thus challenge the norm, old perspectives and definitions are challenged and more room for actions is created. What can happen when women organise is presented in the next section, as will be shown, power have worked and influenced the development also within the group.

Fisherwomen and group dynamics

The more interviews I conducted the more I realised how different the perceptions were of the association, and of specific situations. A shared vision or shared goals seemed to be missing somehow. Some of the interviewed seemed to have or have had intentions to participate in established politics and management, while others saw/see Fisherwomen as equal to the "Fish Leather Project" and was/is only interested in tanning and dressing fish skin. The women I talked to had thus become part of the network or project at different times, which can explain the differing descriptions, different interests as well as goals with the engagement. But there seem to be other reasons as well, which are based in the social interaction within the group. One of the women I interviewed did for example not know that Fisherwomen are represented in RAC, how is that possible in such a small association? Some of the women described the relations within the group as good and open, others described situations and relations that give an opposite picture. I will now try to account for my interpretations of explicit and implicit descriptions of situations that have affected the development of the group. The descriptions given are very illustrative and grasp common features of collective actions.

First of all, the initiative came from the outside. The frames of the organising were already set when many of the women joined in. The starting point was "Fisheries day" where two women were invited as speakers; their topics were exactly fish skin products and safety issues. Instead of exploring own ideas these topics came to be regarded as two alternatives to focus on. It does not have to imply problems, but a lack of common agreements or exploration of interests and concerns can open up for doubts.

Since one of the initiator of the project, who is also described as the driving force in Fisherwomen, also works within fisheries management, old hierarchic thinking were implicit brought in. The women implicitly perceived her as the leader, waiting for her taking initiatives and deciding, a role she did not want but did not manage to get rid of on her own. Reflecting on the situation she says: "It would have been different if I had not been engaged, if I had been detached and not been working with the leather myself and instead just had come in as an external project leader. Now I was so engaged in it, a part of it as well as leading it all. It simply is not sustaining." So the different roles all at once was difficult to handle alone in combination with the practical issues, that it was finished in time and that the money was used the way it was intended etc. She describes the development as "First when you started you kind of had the others with you but as time went by and you had some success envy comes in. It gets kind of 'why didn't you do like that' and 'can we not do more like that' and things like that. A bit of questioning. Therefore I think everyone has to be part of it from the beginning, it just doesn't work doing it on your own, to come to the meetings and say 'well do

you have any ideas' or 'what are we supposed to do today?' ... And then when we would carry this out I sometimes had to push it, which is not very nice."

Having an implicitly prescribed leader seemed to cause passivity among the other participants and in some cases frustration. One woman describes it as the following: "I was so filled with anguish when I went to these meetings, I found it really hard... No one really grabbed it since everyone was so afraid of stepping on each other's toes and no one should deviate. The tall poppies syndrome is so strong and has been within the fisheries... I didn't really know how to act, if you do not say anything you feel like you don't participate and if you do say something you feel it's wrong. So I several times felt like giving in, that it wasn't really fun. ...But I do think that I sometimes acted and made clear because you could sit at meetings where nothing happened and no decisions were taken. It was all just a kind of coffee break. I guess that made me put less energy on the project..."

My interpretation is that the women were lacking a shared meaning of what the project implied. This led to different expectations; some may have perceived it as a social activity while other expected to achieve the project objectives (Hallberg & Ljung 2005:118). This interpretation is further strengthened by other women's descriptions. Some thought everything had functioned well and that it was nice that the project leader took so much responsibility, although some expresses a bad conscious for not helping out more. Such different perceptions of the process can be understood by the different expectations. The tall poppies syndrome also illustrates the prevailing norms that most likely affected peoples willingness to act negatively in fear of being seen as superior. Openness could have reduced the differences in expectations, broken some norms, and further improved the climate that reduced the motivation and restricted creativity. But since the leader role was established and there was a reluctance to bring things out in the open, the hierarchy and roles were never discussed and the destructive practices continued. The participants did not act as a collective.

The situation got worse when a new member was brought in by one of the Fisherwomen. The new member did not have any direct relation to fisheries and many women were sceptics to her participation. After all, she was not to be considered as a real Fisherwoman. Here the vague definition of a Fisherwoman becomes a problem, leading to distrust. The project leader was thus dependent on this new woman since she contributed a lot to the project so she continued to be a part of the group, at least on the surface. The previous disintegrated group thus found a common denominator in the new participant and their level of engagement increased. One woman describes it as: "There is still this implicit thing that you should not step on each others toes, but it has become so much better since the common enemy was discovered, then you could agree somehow"

So the new participant caused the creation of two subgroups and the conflict arose when some of the women together with the project leader engaged in the Network of Nordic Coastal and Fisherwomen. The boundaries for the network and Fisherwomen were not very clear so when the engagement by some in Nordic Fisherwomen resulted in a trip abroad to an international conference the discontent in the other subgroup arose, or the conflict escalated. The subgroup with new member thought the others went to the conference as members of Fish Skin Project and threatened the project leader with sending letters to the newspapers to reveal the incorrectness in their actions. The conflict ended when the Fisherwoman who brought in the new member as well as the new member herself ceased to come to the meetings. Left was a more united group who together managed to bring the project to an end. Those members are the ones who are still active in the now established association.

My pre-understanding before I started interviewing was that the association was participating in the institutional framework for fisheries and this picture remained also after I had talked to my first interviewee, who had functioned as a driving force in the Fish skin project and who also was its initiator. As I recall the interview situation I think she was careful to be as inclusive as possible, and not picture herself as a leader. When I returned for a second interview I brought up the questions that arose as I conducted the interviews regarding e.g. group dynamics and she confirmed that she during the project had come to have a leader role, which she was now trying to get rid of. First of all, the frames of the organising were already set when many of the women joined in. The starting point was “Fisheries Day” where two women were invited as speakers, their topics were exactly fish skin products and safety issues. Instead of exploring own ideas these topics came to be regarded as two alternative directions to focus on. It does not have to imply problems, but a lack of no common agreements or explorations of interests and concerns can open up for doubts. Engaging women as a strategic move implies that something would be gained. But do women have to contribute with something extraordinary in order to be legitimate actors? That including women would mean an extra contribution is to be read in the official background description of Fisherwomen as well as expressed among a few of the women. But my interpretation is that those women just mirrored a viewpoint coming from somewhere else, tentatively the national fisheries management who have raised women’s involvement in e.g. refinement and development of new practices, as a strategic issue. (See e.g. *Gemensamma Fiskeripolitikens Jämställdhetseffekter*, Fiskeriverket.) I base this interpretation on how the women expressed themselves. Many did not say “us” when they talked about the strategic importance of including women, they said “them”. And in general, although there are exceptions, the women seem to perceive refinement and product development as a field of work belonging to men. They describe the men as conservative and that they do not see the possibilities, that they themselves would take the initiatives is thus not described as an option.

4.5 Conclusions

If returning to the questions at issue:

How do Fisherwomen describe and frame their issues, needs and future hopes?

How can we understand Fisherwomen’s organising?

What happens when a group organised as women meets with established stakeholders in the institutional setting of CFP?

What happened when and since the Fisherwomen organised?

My interpretations of the result and discussion have given the following conclusions.

Fisherwomen’s issues, needs and future hope stands in relation to their role as women. In this specific context it means i.e. their roles as mothers, wives/partners, employees and economic supporters. My conclusion, from interpreting the aggregated result, is that they question the established idea of fishery as something taken for granted as they to different extents describe the practice as unsustainable in economical, ecological and social terms.

My answer to the second question is that Fisherwomen’s organising is filled with deconstruction and preservations, still it is perceived as empowering and it rearranges borders as they act collectively. Their organising does not have to be consistent in order to deconstruct stereotypes, by naming themselves Fisherwomen they categorise the other sex constituting the norm, and thereby challenge definitions and ideas that are taken for granted i.e. what can be roomed in the term fisher.

As the Fisherwomen met with the established fisheries politics and management the resistance was implicitly and explicitly discovered. As the Fisherwomen co-operate with other stakeholders they have to some extent adjusted to the power structures, as they in this setting do not name their matters as womanly. In general, words that refer to sex, stereotypes and deconstruction of the gender order seem to be a bit controversial among the women themselves. Most likely because of the resistance of prevailing norms and orders which women and men (re)construct in interaction.

The development of Fisherwomen from network to project to association has been subject to factors that influences the possibilities for creative collective action in all organisations. E.g. expectations, hierarchies, power, conflicts, and openness. If the group had been more open, the levels of motivation, participation, and trust would most likely have been higher. The preconditions for acting collectively would as a consequence been better.

The study agrees with previous research over the dependency relations between fishermen and fisherwomen (Thompson 1985) and how roles are transforming as ecological and economical conditions changes (Davis 1993). My conclusions from this case study deviates from Maria Udén (2004) who speculates in women becoming keypersons in new practices if their roles are formalised. Since my result show no such interest from the women subject to my study I rather speculate in the transforming role that womens organising can have within a male dominated sector in terms of i.e. definitions and norms, and how that interlinks with processes in the ecological systems.

5 Overall conclusions

If bringing the two studies together, what overall conclusions can be drawn?

Firstly, the institutional (formal/informal) framework of CFP is preserving destructive practices since it is built on opposition. The actors are locked into their roles since they have their positions in capacity of their interest. Pushing for the own interests consequently becomes the main goal since you want to keep your positions, so there is constant competition. The consequence is overall reductionism since each and everyone only see to their specific interest.

Secondly, the rigid structure based on competition results in distrust. Without trust the exploration of power relations and asymmetric perspectives becomes difficult. But since the actors do seem to know each other rather well there is what I interpret as intersubjective meaning in terms of norms, assumptions, and knowledge. This is what I perceive as the reason why the actors go on communicating although they seemingly not trust each other.

Thirdly, since the system is built around opposing actors with certain sets of intersubjective meanings the inclusion of new actors becomes threatening. The position as well as the norms that gives you the position are at risk. You know what you have but not what you get. Instead of learning new perspectives that might lead to new set of ideas and solutions the competition works as an excluding factor for new actors.

Finally, the world of fisheries is a world of men. When women enter the scene power relations (not necessarily only between the sexes) and men's privileges as norm makers is revealed. Fisherwomen not only challenge the meaning of the sexes, they challenge the

meaning of fish/er/ies. Since the whole CFP system is built around fish as a resource, landed by fishermen, Fisherwomen's involvement challenges two overall dominating discourses. However, my interpretations are just one possible perception of complexity and how ecology, economy and social dimensions are intimately intertwined. So, can it be that the ecological crisis in our seas will bring out something positive in terms of transformation of destructive social relations?

6 References

Charon, Joel. 1995. *Symbolic Interactionism – an introduction, an interpretation, an integration*. Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

Cox, Robert. 2006. *Environmental Communication and the Public Sphere*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi.

Davis, Dona L. *When men become “women” : Gender Antagonism and the changing sexual geography of work in New Foundland*. Sex Roles, Vol. 29. Nos. 7/8, 1993.

Eduards, Maud. 2002. *Förbjuden handling. Om kvinnors organisering och feministisk teori*. Liber, Kristianstad.

Europeiskt fiske. *Kvinnor inom fisket: en underskattad roll*. Nr 17 Juli 2003. Europeiska Kommissionen. http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/publications/magaz/fishing/mag17_sv.pdf, 2008-05-28

Gemensamma Fiskeripolitikens Jämställdhetseffekter, Fiskeriverket. http://www.fiskeriverket.se/download/18.1e7cbf241100bb6ff0b80001682/uppdrag_GFPs_jmst-hetseffekter.pdf, 2008-04-07

Gerrard, Siri. *Women in fisheries: Is the concept “The ground crew” still valid? Descriptive, normative, and visionary claims*. http://www.marecentre.nl/people_and_the_sea_3/papers/Stream%204/Panel%202/gerrard.%20revised.pdf, 2008-04-07

Linell, Per. 2007. *Essentials of dialogism. Aspects and elements of a dialogical approach to language, communication and cognition*. Department of Communication Studies, Linköping University, Sweden.

Lövkrona, Inger. Hierarki och makt. Genusperspektiv på arbetsdelningen i det tidigmoderna hushållet. . *Kvinnor och jord. Arbete och ägande från medeltid till nutid*. Red Liljewall, Britt, Niskanen, Kirsti & Sjöberg, Maria. Skrifter om skogs- och lantbrukshistoria 15. p.31-43

Puris, Trevor and Hunt, Alan. 1993. *Discourse, Ideology, Discourse, Ideology, Discourse, Ideology...* The British Journal of Sociology, Vol 44, No 3, (September 1993) p.473-499

Regional och lokal samförvaltning av fiske, Fiskeriverket. 2006 http://www.fiskeriverket.se/download/18.5994f41e110b6bbe5b680001787/samforvaltning_slutrapport+I%C3%A5guppl%C3%B6st.pdf, 2008-05-22

Thompson, Paul. *Women in the fishing: The roots of power between the sexes*. Comparative studies in Society and History. Vol. 27, NO 1. (Jan, 1985), p.3-32.

Udén, Maria. *Jämställdhet från lax till löja. Ett projekt för att kartlägga omständigheterna kring kvinnors deltagande i deltagande i fiskenäringen i Norrbotten inklusive offentliga beslutsprocesser*. Research Report. Institutionen för Arbetsvetenskap. Avdelningen för genus och teknik. Luleå Tekniska Universitet.

Appendix

Intervjuguide

Presentation av mig och studien.

Inga namn, om uppenbart vem det är så försöker jag skriva så att det inte går att koppla till enskilda individer, specifik plats osv. Om väldigt känsliga frågor kan det beskrivas i generella drag och inte hänvisas till specifik individ.

Fri intervjustruktur: vad, hur, berätta mer om. Vill att du ska berätta om Fiskarkvinnorna (ditt deltagande), ert arbete och deltagande i förvaltningen/fiskeripolitiken lokalt/regional/nationellt/internationellt.

Jag bandar för att kunna gå tillbaka i materialet för bearbetning.

Fiskarkvinnorna

- Berätta mer om ditt engagemang i Fiskarkvinnorna. Hur, när?
 - Var det någon specifik händelse som ledde fram till engagemanget?
 - Vad betyder Fiskarkvinnorna för dig personligen? Vad är det som driver dig (och de andra)?
 - Hur arbetar ni? Aktiviteter, målsättningar?
 - Hur ser organisationen ut? Utveckling? Nätverk, ideellt, anställda?
 - Vad är det för kriterier för medverkan? Kön, intresse etc?
 - Finns det några föregångare? Samarbetar ni med andra (kvinno)grupper, organisationer? Vilka och på vilken nivå?
 - Hur skulle du beskriva relationerna mellan ni som är medlemmar? Bakgrunder. Eniga om målsättningar, bemötande, delaktighet, beslutsfattande?
 - Vad har ni fått för bemötande från allmänhet, familj, politiker, tjänstemän? Hur tolkar du det?
-

Jämställdhet

- Hur kommer det sig att det behövs särskilda grupper för kvinnor?
 - Hur är det att leva på Gotland som kvinna? Som man?
 - Vad är jämställdhet för dig? Hur långt är det kvar? Vad är bra/mindre bra?
-

Fiskesektorn

- Hur ser du på situationen i Östersjön? när det gäller t.ex. fiskebestånd? Är du orolig?
 - Hur ser du på fiskenäringen? Hur skulle du beskriva/definiera situationen och utvecklingen?
 - Vem tycker du bär ansvaret för den situation du beskriver?
 - Kan du berätta om mäns och kvinnors ställning inom fiskesektorn? Lokalt/generellt? Arbetsfördelning?
-

Delaktighet/representation

- Hur ser du på Fiskeförvaltningen/ politiken här på Gotland?
 - Kan du berätta hur beslut fattas och rådgivning går till i fiskerifrågor här på Gotland? Vilka deltar (aktörer/grupper) idag, vilka har mandat vid beslut? Vad tycker du om det?
 - Vilka tycker du bör delta i rådgivning och beslutsfattande i fiskerifrågor? Vilka ska bjudas in till processen och mötena?
 - Hur fungerar relationen mellan Fiskarkvinnorna och andra grupper/intressenter/politiker/tjänstemän? Stöd/motstånd? Exemplifiera!
 - Har Fiskarkvinnorna något inflytande? På vad?
 - Vad är din tolkning?
 - Vad har du fått för respons av kollegor inom FV?
 - Jobbar du på andra nivåer än lokalt? Vad får du för respons?
 - Finns det något som skulle kunna förbättras? (Vad skulle vara annorlunda för att du/ni skulle delta?)
-

Politik

- Vad tycker du om fiskeripolitiken? Lokalt, nationellt, EU?
 - Hur ser du på den diskussion som förs om situationen och framtida fiskepolitik och förvaltning i Sverige och EU?
-

Framtiden

- Vad har du för tankar om framtiden? För Fiskarkvinnorna, fiskenäringen på Gotland, situationen i havet osv.
- Mirakelfråga

