



# Influencing Fisheries Policies

A Role for the MUN Policy Fishery  
Forum?

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# Where are Fisheries Policy Decisions Made?

- Federal Cabinet, especially Prime Minister and Minister of Fisheries and Oceans—offshore, harvesting, interprovincial and international trade.
- Provincial Cabinet, especially Premier and Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture—onshore, processing
- This is where decision-making POWER is exercised
- But what and who INFLUENCES the decision-makers?

# Influences on Fisheries Policies

- Many, various and changing over time
- Ideology/political philosophy of ruling party
- Fisheries economists and fisheries scientists (stronger at federal level)
- Sociologists, social anthropologists and community economic developers (stronger at provincial level)

# Influences on Fisheries Policies (cont.)

- Interest groups e.g. FFAWU, SPNL, environmental groups—often conflicting
- Constituents, media, public
- Commissions and task forces—e.g. Kirby Task Force in early 1980s
- Party platforms—e.g. 2003 Blue Book
- Government strategic plans—e.g. Managing All Our Resources (Peckford, 1979); Change and Challenge (Wells, 1992)



Issue for this group:  
How to insert itself in this process?

**Fisheries Policies in Historical  
Context**



# Confederation and the Birth of Current Fisheries Policies System

- Surprisingly little attention in National Convention and Terms of Union
- More concerned with short-term fiscal challenges than long-term fisheries development
- Striking ease with which assimilated into federal Department of Fisheries



# Did Smallwood (1949-1972)

## “Neglect the Fisheries?”

- Industrialization: from flakes to fish plants (salted to frozen)
- Resettlement and consolidation (“burn your boats”)
- BUT: genuine effort towards a national fisheries policy and programs—minimal success, notably Salt Fish Corporation (Aidan Maloney)
- Fisherperson’s UI/EI—1956(?), integral part of rural economy
- Opening of Fisheries College in 1963



# Frank Moores and Brian Peckford: “Controlling All Our Resources”

- Moores (1972-1979): super ports?
- 1977: 200-mile limit and expansion of capacity
- Peckford (1979-1989): sought balance between offshore and inshore—preserve the latter
- Lobby for Joint Management Board (modelled on C-NLOPB)—rejected by federal government (fish swim)
- Important difference between policy *formation* and policy *implementation*
- Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment—Joint Policy Board?





# Kirby Task Force and Fisheries Restructuring

- Promise of 200-mile limit (1978)
- Exaggerated expectations of northern cod stock growth and subsequent overcapacity
- Fisheries crisis of early 1980s
- Fishery Restructuring Agreement (1983)
- Creation of National Sea and Fishery Products International
- FPI: sensitive development during 1980s but miscalculated stocks growth



# Crisis Management in 1990s

- Pre-moratoria crisis: Dave Vardy and Ken Stein chair provincial and federal task forces
- Les Harris report
- Moratoria
- TAGS and NCARP
- Successful diversification of species—*positive*\*
- But undermining of equilibrium of rural economy: fish harvesting, fish processing, subsistence production, EI/make-work, non-fisheries work



# Wells and Tobin

- Wells more of a federalist, but broke with Mulroney over Meech Lake—negative repercussions for coordinated development
- Crisis management precluded much else
- Diversification within and outside the fisheries (Economic Recovery Commission—New Opportunities for Growth)
- Tobin: increase in shrimp licenses to compensate for cod failure exacerbated overcapacity



# Danny Williams and Fisheries

- Loss of FPI (Crosbie and Trepassey; Williams and Young)
- Increased provincial support for fisheries science
- Significant growth in aquaculture industry (Trevor Taylor column re-Connaigre Peninsula)
- Failure of crab sharing plan: Trevor Taylor (harvesters opposed)
- Failure of joint marketing proposal: Williams (processors opposed)
- Failure of MOU: Tom Clift

# Recent Policy Issues: Dunderdale and Harper

- Harper government neo-liberal challenges (laissez-faire by design): EI reforms, review of fleet separation policy
- Dunderdale: more laissez-faire by default; deal with the fall-out
- Lack of a coherent fisheries policy for either NL or for Canada as a whole

# What Can We Do?

- Out of the Ivory Tower and into the Political Arena?—different thinking: strategies and tactics
- Major challenge—consensus among ourselves about what needs to be done
- Maybe agree on a framework?
- Assuming achieved: need a concise, well-articulated document (manifesto?) in plain language

# What Can We Do? (cont.)

- Lobbying campaign at both federal and provincial levels
- Ministers, deputies, premier
- Opposition parties
- Election platforms
- Influential groups e.g. Strategic Partnership, Business Coalition
- Media
- Need professional help to design and implement a strategy and tactics



# A Different Kind of Challenge

- Do we want to go there? i.e. this Forum
- Would we need support of MUN President, senior executive and Board of Regents?
- Or—continue as a forum for education, information exchange and dialogue?
- Leave it to members separately or others to work to influence government policy?
- Maybe aim to influence the influencers?