“Rationalized Out”: Discourses and Realities of Fisheries Privatization in Kodiak, Alaska

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Abstract.—This chapter explores the relationship between state discourses and policies of marine enclosure and fishing livelihoods in remote coastal villages in the Kodiak Archipelago. The framing of fisheries access privatization as “rationalization,” the natural commonsense ideology of neoclassical economics, prioritizes goals of economic efficiency and aggregate profit maximization. These economic theories of disconnection (Taylor 2006) miss the important social and cultural attachments to place, identity, and lifestyle that characterize many fishing livelihoods. Based on ethnographic research in three Alutiiq fishing villages, I explore how privatization policies have constrained flexible, kin-based fishing economies and have caused disproportionate reductions in fisheries participation. Related social changes, including the emergence of a lost generation that has few social, cultural, or economic ties to commercial fishing, pose challenges for community sustainability. The discourses and realities of rationalization are remaking the relationship between fishing communities and the resources on which they depend. Place-based, collective fishing lifestyles are being replaced by individual private fishing rights for the elite. With the continued enclosure of fisheries access comes both a normative reframing of just outcomes and a material permanency of resource access and ownership, both of which are becoming increasingly difficult to dislodge.

Introduction

In Kodiak, resistance to fisheries access privatization climaxed at a 2006 North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting. A 7-ft rat supported by his pack of angry fishermen in matching anti-privatization t-shirts stormed in on a public testimony hearing on new plans to privatize access to the groundfish fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska. The rat embodied a vocal protest by many in the Kodiak fishing community against the policies being sold to them as commonsense “rationalization.” Recast as “ratz” and utilizing rodent metaphors and imagery, many in the Kodiak community fought to reclaim the language and scope of the fisheries privatization debate. During the months leading up to the council meeting, Kodiak stores and restaurants were plastered with handmade anti-ratz posters (Figure 1). Fishermen, storekeepers, and community residents gathered in Kodiak coffee shops and bars to talk about ratz and organize several protests (Figure 2). These groups reacted against recent proposed policies and anticipated impacts, but, importantly, they also rejected the discursive framing of rationalization as value-free fisheries restructuring.

This chapter begins with an exploration of the framing of fisheries rationalization as the commonsense ideology of neoclassical economics. This ideology is often presented as universal and value-neutral. The construction of an objective rationalization discourse and the property rights problem of
fisheries management within this economic framework silences important debates about the political, economic, and social assumptions implicit in this fundamental change in the way fishing access is regulated and allocated. The Kodiak rat and his pack, in their discourse of ratz, reject the assumption that individual ownership of resource rights and market allocation are fair mechanisms for managing fisheries. They draw attention to the inequities of rationalization, often focusing on negative impacts experienced by crew members, new fishery entrants, and fishing communities.

Based on ethnographic research in remote Alutiiq fishing communities, I explore one of these areas of distributive inequity. Rationalization policies that limit and commodify the right to fish have negatively impacted village ways of life in the Kodiak Archipelago. Lifestyle fishermen (Mason 1993) and their communities have become disadvantaged in the move to privatized access fisheries management. Villagers link fisheries privatization policies with economic impacts and social change in their communities. Since the implementation of fishing permits and quotas, kin-based, lifestyle fishing has been increasingly constrained. Within the past generation, commercial fisheries have shifted from the dominant social and economic focus of village communities to a prospect for only a
few elite fishermen. Values of individualism and competitiveness have become further institutionalized. A lost generation of young people that have few social, cultural, or economic ties to commercial fishing faces an uncertain future.

Taylor (2006), in his critique of the assumptions that many economists utilize about human-environment relations, reminds us that it is the attachments to particular places and particular ways of life that help us make meaning and find coherence in our lives and our work. Taylor argues that the neoclassical economic ideology is based on a theory of disconnection. The rationalization discourse that frames fishing practice narrowly as efficient wealth generation and fishing rights as alienable commodities employs this theory of disconnection and disintegration. Missing from these theories are the social and cultural values and attachments that typify many community-based fisheries. In the case of Alutiiq fishing communities, the commercial fishing practice has been closely connected to a subsistence lifestyle and economy. Flexible and informal fishing operations

Figure 2. Kodiak protesters, June 2006. Photograph: Courtney Carothers.
that blend fishing for income and fishing for community and cultural sustenance become redefined as inefficient and unproductive in a rationalization framework. With the continued enclosure of fisheries comes a discursive reframing of fishing livelihoods, values, and assumptions and a material permanency of resource access and ownership, both of which are increasingly difficult to dislodge.

**Framing Fisheries Rationalization**

The basic economic problem of commercial fisheries can be seen as the absence of property rights to the fish stocks. (Hannesson 2004)

Property rights are at the center of a massive change in the political economy of the oceans around neoliberal, market-based socioenvironmental policies that enclose for a few what was once the property of all. (Mansfield 2004)

Current fisheries rationalization theory and discourse traces its lineage back to the construction of the property rights problem of fisheries (Macinko and Bromley 2002). Gordon (1954) began a revolution in fisheries management. Gordon argued that rather than a biological problem, the crisis of overfishing is really economic:

In the sea fisheries the natural resource is not private property; hence the rent it may yield is not capable of being appropriated by anyone.

Drawing on Ricardian economics, Gordon shows that without limiting fishing effort to an economic yield, all potential resource rents—generated from the naturally productive capacity of fish stocks—are dissipated. Nearly 30 years later, Moloney and Pearse (1979) reiterate the same economic predicament of open-access fisheries:

The basic economic problem to be addressed is the persistent and inevitable tendency of fishing fleets, whenever they are composed of large numbers of independent enterprises competing for the available catch, to expand redundantly as long as the fishery yields positive net returns....all potential resource rents become dissipated through employment of unproductive labor and capital. The policy issue is thus to find ways of containing this wasteful expansion, or of removing the incentives that cause it.

According to this economic framing, the solution to the problem of fisheries (articulated by economists in various ways [e.g., overfishing, race for fish, overcapitalization, and mismanagement]) is to remove unproductive labor and capital, which dissipate resource rents through policies of enclosure. Commodifying the right to fish and establishing an optimal economic yield maximizes rent generation. Creating markets for the buying and selling of these rights leads to maximized economic efficiency (i.e., those less efficient harvesters will be bought out by more efficient harvesters). In a recent view in *The Privatization of the Oceans*, Hannesson (2004) sums up the ideal of economic fisheries management:

The simplest and yet probably the best fisheries management system one could hope for is the setting of total catch quotas on the basis of expert advice (fisheries biologists and economists) and unfettered buying, selling, and leasing of shares of the total catch quota.

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1 Gordon cites earlier work that explicitly makes the connection between fisheries management and economics (e.g., Huntsman 1944; Graham 1952), but at the time of his publication, little if any research was actually conducted on the economics of fishing. In the 1950s, fisheries management was predominantly in the domain of biologists.
The framing of this restructuring based on individual property rights and market-based allocation has been presented as so logical in fisheries management that it is often termed rationalization.

As fisheries economist and analyst Fina (2005) notes, in North Pacific fisheries management, rationalization has become a frequently used but rarely defined term. He defines rationalization as “an allocation of labor and capital between fishing and other industries that maximizes the net value of production.” In economic discourse, rationalization is often defined in opposition to so-called undesirable features of unrestricted access fisheries. These open access fisheries are characterized by negative terms: an unproductive use of labor, redundant fishing boats, overcapacity, unnecessary capital, a waste of manpower and capital, generally by their inefficiencies and hence irrationality. Rationalization, then, is the process whereby these undesirable characteristics are addressed, often involving a “total revamping of the way a fishery is run” (North Pacific Fishery Management Council 2003).

This restructuring from open access rights to restricted individual rights involves a significant ideological reframing. In the language of economic rationalization, efficiency is conceived of as a natural fact, not a social value. Official rationalization discourse gains much of its symbolic power because of this presumed value neutrality (Bourdieu 1999). The discourse of rationalization is not presented as a political restructuring but rather a natural, inevitable outcome. Individual property rights and market-based allocation encourages naturalization of competition and individualism; these are seen as ‘natural laws’... there is a readjustment of our sensibilities (Lakoff 2005).

Once this ideology of rationalization frames the problems and solutions of fisheries management, it often becomes impossible to imagine how things could have been ordered differently (Bourdieu 1998). Fisheries managers often articulate the impossibility of imagining viable, let alone desirable, alternatives to the “natural” wave of rationalization sweeping the North Pacific. Picking up on a phrase often repeated on the Kodiak docks and in the bars by those that have been displaced by these policies—“rationalized out”—one fisheries manager remarked,

Those who have been displaced or rationalized out might also have found themselves displaced because of the total collapse of a fishery to which access is unlimited. Bankruptcy, and its consequent displacement (not to mention death at sea because of fishing in unsafe conditions), is frequently about the only alternative to rationalization.

This statement demonstrates how pervasive this discourse of inevitability promoting rationalization has become in North Pacific fisheries management; indeed, the only alternatives listed here are fishery collapse, bankruptcy, and death. The economic justification of rationalization is not to prevent the biological collapse of a fishery, nor is it implicitly concerned with human safety at sea; it is to make a fishery more efficient.

In addition to naturalizing the privatization of fishing rights, the economic discourse of rationalization employs normative assum-
tions about individual rights and market-based allocation to construct the restructuring process as fair and equitable. Sawyer (2004) states that while the logic of neoliberal privatization “glosses over difference and inequality,” this same logic is used to assert normative assessments of equity of such distribution of resources. Again, Hannesson (2004) is one of the most vocal economists articulating this position of rationalization in the fisheries context:

Less employment in oversized fisheries is not only natural but desirable; after all, excessive fishing effort means unproductive use of labor that should be directed to other purposes (emphasis added).

This ideological reframing of fisheries practice assumes that labor and capital are mobile. That is, inefficient fishermen, once eliminated from fishing, would more productively serve society by finding employment in other occupations. These mobility assumptions do not hold for many remote, resource-dependent communities (Copes 1997). In places where there are limited opportunities for economic diversification, a fleet of many small, inefficient boats is more economically rational than fleet consolidation accompanied by widespread unemployment. This issue brings up basic questions about labor and lifestyle. For many fishermen, fishing is a way of life closely connected to particular places with deep cultural meanings and social ramifications, not merely a wealth-generating activity that is interchangeable with alternative occupations in other places.

As I explore below, other logics and assumptions about fishing as a social, cultural, and economic practice are employed in Kodiak village fisheries. Meaning and identity for many village residents is fundamentally linked to a community-based fishing lifestyle. The inability to fish, therefore, does not equate to merely lost income; rather, the inability to fish is often accompanied by loss of identity, way of life, and, for some, a disconnection with their home communities. Official rationalization discourses based on theories of disconnection are not easily translatable into the realities of village fisheries. Individualizing and commodifying fishing rights seems quite irrational to these fishing livelihoods.

Realities of Rationalization in Place: Kodiak Fishing Village Trends

About 10 of us sit around a table in a conference room at a fancy Anchorage hotel. We are the orange group—one of six such breakout groups at a conference focused on the future of remote fishing communities in Alaska. Our group is made up of rural village residents, fishermen, fishery managers, and academics. We discuss why fishing rights are migrating away from coastal villages. A fisheries manager poses a statement to the group: “Quota share leaving villages says more about the villages than it does about the individual fishing quota program.” Alan, a Kodiak village fisherman speaks up, visibly upset—“Hey if I could have afforded to buy my dad’s permit, I would have. If he could have afforded not to sell it, he would have gifted it to me.” Both father and son struggled with this sale of the right to commercially harvest salmon, a species that has supported life along the coasts of the Kodiak Archipelago for as long as humans have inhabited it. After 20 years, it is apparent that the pain of that sale remains.

In part the manager is correct—fishing rights leaving remote Alaska fishing villages does have much to do with the nature of the communities themselves. Many coastal villages in Alaska are predominantly indigenous communities. Alaska Native villages have faced a long history of colonialism, racism, and forced assimilation and have been economically, politically, and socially restructured. Understand-

4 Names in this chapter are pseudonyms unless full names are given.
ing the historical, sociocultural, and political economic characteristics of Alaska Native villages is essential to analyzing why resource privatization policies tend to disproportionately impact these communities; however, fishing rights leaving village communities is facilitated by fisheries policies that privatize—limit and commodify—the right to fish. Once commodified, fishing rights are alienable. And as Alan reminds us, once sold, fishing rights are often difficult to repossess.

The economic framing of fisheries rationalization described above overlooks the sociocultural attachments of fishing livelihoods. In the following section, I explore how processes of rationalization are increasingly constraining the culture and economy of fishing in remote Kodiak Alutiiq communities. Just as fishermen resist the framing of fisheries rationalization as natural and commonsense, they resist the remaking of kin-based communal fishing lifestyle into elite fishing with profits for the few.

**Research Methods**

The following discussion is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted over 12 months in the city of Kodiak and three remote Alutiiq fishing villages: Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, and Ouzinkie (Figure 3). This research employed a diverse set of methods. I conducted more than 100 semistructured interviews and 71 household surveys; participated in community meetings, events, and fishing trips; and generally observed and recorded the patterns of village life. Household surveying in Larsen Bay was nearly comprehensive (74% of households; $N = 26$). A convenience sample was used in Old Harbor (25% of households; $N = 20$) and Ouzinkie (35% of households; $N = 25$). Household survey statistics for these communities are presented as initial estimates to demonstrate general trends. I also conducted a mail survey of individual Pacific halibut *Hippoglossus stenolepsis* fishing quota holders about their reasons for buying and selling quota, their community history, and their opinions about how quotas have changed the halibut fishery and their communities of residence. A random sample of initial quota share holders and those that have bought or sold quota was stratified so that about 50% of the respondents were residents of small, remote fishing villages like Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, and Ouzinkie. About 14% of the total population of initial halibut quota share holders was sampled ($N = 1,100$). Approximately 48% of the surveys were returned (see Carothers 2008).

I spent my field seasons rotating between the outlying villages and the hub community

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5 To be classified as a small remote fishing community in this analysis, a community must (1) have a population less than 1,500 (U.S. Census 2000), (2) be considered rural by the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, (3) be located less than 10 mi from Alaska coastline (geographic information systems analysis), and (4) have had historic halibut fishery participation (NOAA Fisheries). There are 52 communities that meet this definition.
of Kodiak. The contrast between the smaller communities and the Kodiak center is striking. The city of Kodiak has a population of about 6,000 and is home to one of the largest and most diverse fishing ports in the country. The six Alutiiq villages on the coastline of Kodiak Island are tiny fishing communities by comparison. Accessible only by boat and small plane, these small (populations range from 27 to 211) remote villages are surrounded by sea. Local place names for the seascape abound; each rock, inlet, and fishing spot are seemingly named, while stunning jagged mountains—peaks to 4,000 ft—surrounding some villages remain unnamed.

**Prior to Rationalization: The Cannery Period in Kodiak Alutiiq Villages**

From the early development of canneries in the Kodiak region in the late 1880s through the middle of the 20th century, the relationship between Alutiiq communities and the colonial salmon industry was one of resistance, participation, and hybridization (see Roppel 1994). Over time, as the remote Kodiak communities began to develop in tandem with salmon canneries, resistance gave way to close participation. Alutiiq communities shaped the development of canneries and canneries shaped the development of Alutiiq communities. Canneries were the primary vehicle for integrating coastal villages into commercial fisheries and wage employment (Davis 1976; Mishler 2003). Canneries often operated village services, such as electricity generation, post offices, and health services. The growing fishing industry also brought foreign fishermen to the Kodiak Archipelago, a number of whom married into Alutiiq communities. Mishler and Mason (1996) discuss how these intermarriage patterns generated important sociocultural and economic hybridities in contemporary Kodiak villages (see Crowell et al. 2001 for a general introduction to Alutiiq history and current issues and Gupta 1998 for a discussion of hybridity).

Despite unequal power relations, many Alutiiq fishermen have favorable memories of their involvement with local canneries (from about 1930 through the 1960s). Typically, village men supplied fish for the canneries, and women worked in the cannery plants; a few men also were also employed as carpenters or cannery watchmen (Befu 1970; Davis 1971; Roppel 1994; Dombrowski 2001). Beach seining and fish traps were the primary method of obtaining salmon before purse seining began to dominate in the 1940s and 1950s. During this time, canneries maintained company boats. Village men were often skippers or crewmen of these boats. Some families, often with financing from canneries, purchased or built their own vessels (see Table 1).

In addition to wages and seasonal earnings, the system of credit established by canneries led to a diversification of the subsistence economy and increasing dependence on nonlocal food and materials. An elder fisherman in Larsen Bay recalls that in the 1940s, the local cannery would sell $25 books that were available in the fall good for store merchandise. Most other cannery stores used a credit system. Fishermen would buy things on the books. During the season, it would be paid back, or some would PAF (pay after fishing). Many businesses in Kodiak also extended this informal credit system. Fishermen would settle their bills during one trip to town in the fall; the normal terms of agreement were “no interest and only a handshake.”

The connections between village fishermen and canneries were complex. The credit systems established by canneries did promote an inequitable system of indebtedness (e.g., Dombrowski 2001); however, these systems of credit helped village families weather sea-
Table 1. Village households’ previous involvement in commercial fishing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Skippered a cannery boat (%)</th>
<th>Worked in a cannery (%)</th>
<th>Owns(ed) a boat (%)</th>
<th>Worked as a crewmember (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larsen Bay (N = 26)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Harbor (N = 20)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouzinkie (N = 25)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

seasonal fluctuations and variation in fish stocks and prices. Relationships with canneries were largely seen to be compatible with the flexible, seasonal nature of kin-based lifestyle fishing of Alutiiq villages. The village economy of fishing during the cannery period was defined by large, extended family fishing operations. Both boys and girls grew up on fishing boats. For many fishermen, the goal of running a cannery boat or working for wages in plants was to earn enough money to “make it through the winter.” The canneries shaped a maintenance commercial economy that complemented a marine-based subsistence livelihood. A Larsen Bay fisherman says that village fishing “was about a lifestyle…we caught enough to get through the year. It was never about making money.”

*Fisheries Privatization: Constraining the Village Fishing Way of Life*

Before all this Ouzinkie was a fishing community, free enterprise…It was family fishing. (Permits and quotas) eliminated all that. (Before) you didn’t have to own anything. It worked as a bartering system. You work for the cannery and they took care of you. It became…what do you call it…privatized, taken away from the villages. It used to be family fishing—that was taken away. It devastated all fishing communities. Now you have to buy into the damn thing. Nobody was even thinking about permits. Greed set in from the outside…there used to be 40 boats in this community…it’s killing the villages. Period. (Ouzinkie fisherman)

Beginning in the 1970s, policies that limited and commodified the right to fish created a rupture with the cannery period of flexible lifestyle fishing. Commercial fishing in coastal villages was, and for some continues to be, a livelihood that supports families and a subsistence-based lifestyle in remote places rather than a primarily profit-driven enterprise. A Larsen Bay fisherman recalled that from early on, the idea of limiting and commodifying the rights to fish was seen to challenge this maintenance economy.

We all fought against limited entry. The move for limited entry wasn’t from the Natives. We lived with the ups and downs. Those people that weren’t from the villages wanted it to be profitable every year.

By prioritizing efficient profit generation, the rationalization framework is not embraced as rational, but rather as antithetical to village-based fisheries. The flexible nature of village fishing (i.e. fishing when income is needed and living with the ups and downs) is constrained by rationalization policies that commodify fishing rights.

*Decreasing fishing participation: it all started with the permit.*

Right now, fishing is an essential, not necessarily for income, but for sustenance of life. It is a way of life.
Hopefully, we’ll be able to bring the commercial fishing back to what it was. The young people have been ached out of the fishing—you know, permits—which we are going to try to change. (Ouzinkie resident)

Participation in commercial fishing has declined substantially in Kodiak villages over the last few decades. Within the past 20 years, vibrant boat harbors have shrunk to just a handful of active boats. The decrease in commercial fishing participation has been especially pronounced as it has occurred over just one generation. Most of my interviews with older residents began much the same: “I started fishing when I was six or seven.” “I could run a boat by the time I was 10.” “All of us kids helped out on the boat.” More than 70% of sampled households in each village have been previously directly involved in commercial fishing. Going back just one generation, this number increases to 80–90% of households. Currently, less than 30% of households in each village actively participate in commercial fishing (Table 2).

Village residents link the individualization and privatization of fishing rights to the decrease in fishing participation in their communities. One Ouzinkie fisherman summed up—“It all started with the permit.” Salmon and herring limited entry permit systems set the stage for impacts that followed from the issuance of individual fishing quotas in the halibut fishery. The current impacts of Bering Sea crab rationalization (Lowe 2008, this volume) and proposed Gulf of Alaska groundfish rationalization have also had an impact in Kodiak communities. Each of these policies is part of a larger privatization trend that limits and commodifies the right to fish. This privatization trend, as well as global political economic changes, has brought about decreased access to and participation in commercial fishing. As a result, villages are depopulating, values are changing, and young people are going growing up without a commercial fishing identity. These community-level changes in the context of a shifting fisheries management regime where goals of efficiency prevail have profound implications for the continuity of village economies supported by the sea.

Salmon limited entry permits issued in the early 1970s had significant impacts on Alaska Native involvement in commercial fishing (see Reedy-Maschner 2008; Langdon 2008; both this volume). The program created a system of individual tradable permits based on fishing area and gear type. State-verified fishing involvement (e.g., boat and gear permit ownership) and economic reliance on fishery-related income were the primary criteria used to allocate permits. Prioritizing individual capital in-

Table 2. Village households’ involvement in commercial fishing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Currently fishes (%)</th>
<th>Previously fishes (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larsen Bay (N = 26)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Harbor (N = 20)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouzinkie (N = 25)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Economists note an important distinction between programs like salmon limited entry and individual fishing quotas. While access to salmon has been limited and commoditized by tradable permits, the race for fish still exists because permits do not confer a proportion of the total allowable catch. Rents are still dissipated in such fisheries. Fishermen also note the distinction. The competitive aspect of salmon fishing and the possibility of large catches and especially profitable seasons are not a feature of quota-based fishing.
vestment in the salmon fishery over collective labor and informal investments disadvantaged those participating in the kin-based fisheries of Kodiak villages. For example, the majority of village fishermen participated in the salmon fishery as crew members. In most instances, crew members were not issued limited entry permits. Prior to limited entry, it was a reasonable expectation that many crewmen would transition into skippers and boat owners. The necessity of purchasing expensive permits greatly impeded crewmen’s ability to continue this pattern of upward mobility. A Larsen Bay fisherman stated that, very early on, young crewmembers became alienated from fishing as a result of this restricted access program.

With limited entry, most of the young people didn’t want to be crewmembers their whole lives—they got out of fishing. (It would have) cost them $200,000 to get into the fishery.

While one of the goals of the limited entry program was to keep fishing rights in Alaska and make fishing more profitable (Homan 2007), rural Alaska Native communities disproportionately lost fishing rights because of this program (Langdon 1980; Kamali 1984). When the salmon fisheries became license-limited, Alaska Natives represented 44% of the initial permit holders. Eight years after the implementation of this tradable permit system, Alaska Native permit holdings had decreased by 20% (Kamali 1984). Overall, about 3,000 fishermen were displaced because they did not receive limited entry permits (Roppel 1994).

Since the limited entry program was implemented in 1975, between 50% and 67% of limited-entry salmon purse-seine permits have left Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, and Ouzinkie. Figure 4 displays annual community holdings of Kodiak salmon purse seine permits. This outflow of permits reflects permits sales, permit holders migrating from their communities, and, in several cases, interim-use permit holders that were denied permanent permits (one denial in Larsen Bay and two denials each in Old Harbor and Ouzinkie). Additional individuals from these communities submitted unsuccessful applications for permits. As they were never issued Kodiak salmon purse-seine permits, these individuals are not included in the holdings presented in Figure 4; however, their denied claims also represent a historic loss of fishing access rights related to the implementation of the limited-entry program. In addition to the handful of interim-use permit holders that were not given permanent permits, the state denied another 20 applications for Kodiak salmon seine permits submitted by residents of Larsen Bay (2 denials), Old Harbor (8 denials), and Ouzinkie (10 denials) (C. Tide, State of Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, personal communication).

In 2006, only one salmon seine permit each was actively fished in Larsen Bay and Ouzinkie, and another six permits were used in Old Harbor. The economics of salmon seining has played a key role in more recent fisheries participation declines. The de-

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8 State of Alaska limited-entry permits are classified by geographic area, gear type, and species. Purse seine is used here as one example of a gear group permit for the Kodiak Island area salmon fishery (classified as S01K permits). Other salmon gear groups in this area include set gill net and beach seine.

9 In some cases, the state process of determining permit eligibility was protracted. Individuals were able to apply for interim-use permits while the state adjudicated applications. In Larsen Bay, two people held interim-use permits in 1975; one of these individuals was given a permanent permit, the other was not. In Old Harbor, nine people held interim-use permits between 1975 and 1978. Seven of these individuals eventually received permits (four in 1975, one in 1977, one in 1978, and one in 1982) and two were denied. Eight individuals held interim-use permits in Ouzinkie between 1975 and 1991. Six individuals were granted permanent permits (four in 1975, one in 1976, and one in 1980) and two were denied (C. Tide, State of Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, personal communication).
pressed price of wild-caught salmon, as well as rising fuel costs, has led to more recent decreased participation in this fishery (Knapp et al. 2007). Trends of poor salmon runs or poor prices have been noted in earlier periods (Roppel 1994). While participation declined when prices did, a permanent exodus from commercial fishing did not accompany these downturns. The nature of privatized access fishing has made it more difficult to weather economic fluctuations and maintain flexible participation in several fisheries with the large capital investment necessary to purchase and retain fishing rights.

The issuance of individual fishing quotas in the halibut fishery in 1995 produced similar results in most villages. Especially for communities with populations of 1,500 or less, there is strong trend of out-migration of halibut fishing rights (Carothers 2008). Overall, there has been a 32% decline in halibut quota held in Gulf of Alaska villages\(^\text{10}\) and a 46% decline in individuals holding halibut quota in these communities (NOAA Fisheries Service 2005). In Larsen Bay, 96% of halibut quota has left the community and 80% has emigrated from

\(^{10}\) The trend of quota share out-migration is common to small, remote Gulf of Alaska fishing communities. These coastal villages were not eligible for the Community Development Quota program established for Bering Sea communities in western Alaska that directly allocates fishing rights to groups representing small indigenous communities (National Research Council 1999b). That program has helped bring fisheries infrastructure and foster the development of fisheries participation. By contrast, many Gulf of Alaska communities had developed commercial fishing economies when privatized access programs were implemented. This set of communities has since experienced a net loss of fishing rights and participation (NOAA Fisheries Service 2005).
Old Harbor. In contrast, Ouzinkie fishermen have retained 86% of their halibut quota.

Fishermen in Ouzinkie were among the first to diversify into halibut fishing. After the 1964 earthquake and tidal waves, many of the local salmon streams were destroyed and had low runs. An Ouzinkie fisherman recalls that when he and his father first started halibut fishing in 1971, people in the village thought they were crazy; however, halibut fishing quickly caught on. He estimates that there were 15–20 people fishing in the 1970s. Langdon and Miller (1984) note that in the early 1980s, some Ouzinkie fishermen relied entirely on halibut for their income, compared to other villages where halibut fishing was only one component of a diverse set of fisheries (although they note the importance of the halibut fishery varied by year). As the price of salmon went up in the late 1980s, many halibut fishermen cut back on their halibut fishing. The qualifying years for halibut individual fishing quotas (1988 through 1990) corresponded to a period of high salmon prices, as well as the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, a period in which many local fishing boats were hired to help with spill cleanup.

The historic importance of halibut fishing in Ouzinkie in part explains why more quota share has been retained in the community compared to other villages. Ouzinkie fishermen do note similar trends of quota share sale; however, several large quota holders in Ouzinkie have been able to acquire or retain their quota (although one of these holders had to declare bankruptcy to prevent his shares being repossessed by the Internal Revenue Service). Ouzinkie also enjoys a geographic advantage relative to the other Kodiak villages in this study. Its close proximity to the port of Kodiak makes it possible for small operators to deliver halibut to processing plants in the Port of Kodiak. This convenient access has enabled some small-quota holders in Ouzinkie to retain their quota.

Disproportion rate of sale and barriers to purchase.—The commodification of fishing rights and their accrual of value led to the alienation of many rural permits that were issued to village fishermen. Several factors contributed to this loss of permits held by Alaska Natives relative to other groups. First, permits quickly amassed great value. Langdon (1980) discusses how many factors contributed to higher rate of sale of permits held by rural Alaska Native residents. He hypothesizes that individuals in rural Alaska use a higher discount rate when making decisions and ranking the utility of current cash flow compared to future potential earnings; this higher discount rate leads to an increased rate of permit sales.

A community leader in Larsen Bay noted that the windfall accumulation of a high-value capital holding was actually detrimental to some village households. Eligibility for assistance programs like subsidized home ownership plans offered through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, implemented in Kodiak villages in the late 1970s, are based on income and capital holdings. Regardless of income, households with a limited-entry permit may not have qualified for assistance programs or may have been required to pay a much larger percentage of their income for housing (J. Wick, Larsen Bay Tribal Council, personal communication). During poor fishing seasons, when finances were slim, selling off capital holdings became a necessity for some households. While many fishermen willingly sold permits, this financial insecurity, as well as debt service and Internal Revenue Service foreclosure, also prompted decisions to sell fishing rights.

Limited access to collateral, financial institutions, and knowledge (about the permit system, transferability, and markets) in rural communities also creates extra barriers to permit purchase. In Larsen Bay, for example, residents note that nonlocal school teachers
were early beneficiaries of the limited-entry program.

Every set-net site in the bay was a teacher…the banks would fund them because they had full time jobs. Someone from the village couldn't get bank loans; they didn't have jobs and no banks would loan to them.

The commodification and transferability of permits, essential to the economic framing of market-based efficiency, is one of the features of privatized access fishing that Kodiak village fishermen often criticize. Many fishermen reject the framing of fishing rights as alienable commodities. Some say they would be in favor of restricted access programs, so long as fishing rights were not given monetary values.

So many Native fishermen sold their permits when times got tough. If there was no monetary value, then they would have stayed in the villages.

Many also see inequities in access (e.g., to financial institutions) that enabled outsiders to gain ownership rights of what they perceive to be local fisheries.

Fishing values and identity.—In this period of enclosure, increasing capitalization, individualization, and competition favored those professional fishermen who became owners (of either boats or permits). Those that could harvest more fish independently, make more profit, and reinvest in the industry had advantages in this system. Contrary to the economic framing of privatized access fishing—that competition and individualism are natural attributes—in Kodiak villages, these are cultural values that had to become institutionalized. An Old Harbor fisherman notes this change during the limited entry period in the 1970s:

When you privatize the fishery and you give individual fishing rights...
with pride and independence in modern times. More than lost economic income, the dramatic decline in commercial fisheries involvement is linked to a loss of identity and independence. When fishing rights became alienable and migrated from the villages, when rights became too expensive to buy, many residents say that pride and independence also left their communities. One village fisherman notes, “Fishing is our lifestyle…you do something your whole life and all of a sudden you’re told no. Psychologically it affects you.” Without access to employment on the water, many village residents support themselves with government transfer payments. In Old Harbor, for example, the percentage of households that received public assistance more than doubled between 1989 and 1999. Commenting on this increase, one Old Harbor resident commented,

“It’s not that the people want to make a lot of money…we just want to make a decent living—to not be dependent. What good are you if the government has to feed you? Now what choice do they have?

Other social problems accompany this loss of independence and identity. High rates of suicide, substance abuse, and domestic abuse define a dark part of village life engendered by a long history of colonialism, forced labor and resettlement, the attempted eradication of languages and cultures, assimilation, development and modernization schemes, and pervasive racism. Village fishermen situate policies of marine enclosure within this historical context of social inequity. Communal, familial fishing enterprises were marginalized once rights were equated with individual capital ownership. A self-sufficient fishing livelihood became a prospect only for a few elite fishermen. Freddie Christiansen, an Old Harbor fisherman, remarked on this fundamental change and the negative impacts it created in his community:

When I was growing up fishing and stuff there was a group of us boys growing up together as far back as I can remember and we all played boats. The goal was to become a skipper of a boat and captain and owner of a boat…1973 rolled around, I started noticing that the implementation of limited entry was having an impact on the self-esteem and the mindset of the guys I was hanging with, including me, realizing that I’m going to have to have $30,000 to buy a permit. So the hopes and dreams of becoming a skipper of a boat…of becoming something or somebody and continuing to reside in their communities…were fading fast. None of the group of nine became skippers except me. I’m not saying that I wasn’t participating in you know, um, the self-destructive practices, drinking, but it just seemed that at such a young age they were doing so much of it. And it took me until I was about 25 or 30 years old to realize what really happened. I attribute to this to the implementation of limited entry. By the time I was 30, three of the boys I grew up with like brothers, best friends were dead. I really attribute it to the implementation of limited entry. I truly believe that’s what happened to them.

Village depopulation.—The fishing villages on Kodiak Island are depopulating. Within the past 20 years, the year-round populations of each study community have roughly decreased by half (Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development 2007). Current residents attribute these declines to decreased fishing access and profitability, few options for

11The U.S. Census reports that approximately 35% of Old Harbor households received public assistance in 1999.
economic diversification, and limited educational opportunities for youth.

Of the surveyed households, 13% in Larsen Bay noted siblings had moved out of the village because of decreased fishing opportunities; that percentage jumps to 33% of Ouzinkie households and 57% of Old Harbor households. Without access to various seasonal fisheries, many of these households relocated to Kodiak or larger cities like Anchorage to seek other employment. Lack of educational opportunities is another primary reason for village emigration. Because educational resources depend on village population, the emigration of fishing families can negatively impact the quality of village schools. Between 40% and 80% of households in the study communities report siblings leaving their home villages for education.

Connections to place are often pronounced among residents of rural communities. My survey of halibut individual fishing quota shareholders shows that compared to residents of other types of communities, respondents in small, remote fishing communities and particularly those that identify as Alaska Native have strong, enduring ties to their communities (Table 3). More than 80% of Alaska Native respondents have multigenerational ties to their communities, compared to only 40% of respondents from other cultural groups. This recent trend of village emigration in Kodiak villages (and many other Gulf of Alaska villages) may affect these continuities. Relocating to economic hubs for employment is not an easy transition for many individuals and families. One former Kodiak villager and current Anchorage resident said that many migrants are displaced, they are out of their element. It’s not just that people go to Anchorage for economic reasons and once they are there, they are fine. They are out of their element and lots of bad things can happen. (There’s) deterioration.

The Lost Generation.—Limited entry caused a weeding out of the village. There’s been a generation of displacement. Declines in fishing involvement and access have led to another recent trend in Kodiak fishing villages—the younger generation has become detached from commercial fishing. People have referred to youngsters (roughly under 30) as the lost generation. Their parents and grandparents grew up as fishermen; however, most no longer participate in fishing. Many village fishermen tell stories of their own childhood; in the past, young men grew up knowing that they would one day be boat owners and captains. Older fishermen remark with sadness that most young people today cannot realistically share that same vision.

When I was young, I grew up knowing that I’d be a fisherman and I knew one day I’d be a boat owner… Guys growing up today don’t know

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<th>Table 3. Halibut individual fishing quota holders’ residency and kin linkages to community.</th>
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<td><strong>Community classification</strong></td>
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<td>Resided &gt; 20 years in community</td>
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that; there’s no reason to think they can be boat owners—most of them can’t be…Parents no longer look at their son and say—he’ll be a fisherman. That entire tradition, that natural profession has been snapped off.

Certainly, the older generations have a romantic nostalgia for the past; however, it is difficult for many village residents to imagine how their remote coastal villages will survive without a next generation of fishermen. Some residents indicate that it is too late for the young people—too many boats and fishing rights have been sold; kids are no longer growing up fishing, they do not share in the fishing identity of their parents or grandparents, and, importantly, most no longer want to be fishermen. In Larsen Bay, a community that houses the oldest operating cannery in Alaska, my survey results indicate that more than 60% of residents discourage young people from getting involved in commercial fishing. The cost of entry is nearly prohibitive and the current price of salmon, still the mainstay for most Kodiak fishing operations, so poor—for some “it’s just not a good living anymore.” Others stressed that commercial fishing is an important part of the heritage, culture, and economy of these fishing villages. One 14-year-old aspiring fisherman was hopeful:

We’ve been fishing here for forever, since the world began. I want to keep the culture and the heritage…but more people are quitting the business. IFQs are making it harder for people in the rural villages to keep jobs on fishing boats. If there aren’t jobs in the village, you can’t have enough money to support your family.

This young man is correct; if they make a home in coastal villages, young families need a source of income. In these remote places, surrounded by the sea, there are few options without access to commercial fisheries.

Fisheries rationalization has not been a singular causal factor in producing the trends described in this chapter; the economic downturn in the price paid to fishermen for wild-caught salmon has certainly contributed to declines in village fishing participation. However, the enclosure of fisheries access has brought about a transformation of resource ownership that makes it difficult to establish new fishing opportunities in remote villages like Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, and Ouzinkie. Limiting and commodifying fishing rights has constrained the diversity and flexibility of fishing opportunities in rural villages. Only those boat owners most able to adapt to the disconnected, profit-oriented fishing have been able to maintain boats and permits.

**Looking Forward**

Many outsiders (bureaucrats, teachers, tourists, and anthropologists) who visit Kodiak communities are immediately enchanted by the dramatic beauty of the land and seascapes. Some that are lucky to stay long enough also learn the wonderful warmth and magnetism of the local people and their fishing way of life. As I was preparing this chapter, I recalled one particularly brisk January evening in the village of Old Harbor. Bundled up and clumsily navigating the icy walk back from an interview, I dreamed of the banya (steam bath) that would greet me upon my return home. It was not the stunning moon rising over the jagged white-capped mountains of Sitkalidak Island that I admired on that evening or the peaceful lapping of the ocean waves just below the snowy village road. What I marveled at on that walk home was the wonderful warmth, sincerity, and dignity that had greeted me in my interview that evening. I was amazed at how John, a village fisherman, described how one lives from the sea and land in this particular place, and I, an outsider, had so much to learn about the intimacy of his knowledge and his connection to place, history, and culture. John
is a fisherman by lifestyle, but he admits that “he couldn't compete with the big boys anymore” and sold his boat; however, he is hopeful for a future that may include fishing for much-needed income. John was one of the crewmen on a fishing trip that caught Old Harbor’s first season of community halibut quota (see Langdon 2008).

The discourses and realities of rationalization are remaking the relationship between fishing communities and the resources on which they depend. Place-based livelihood fishing is being replaced by individual private fishing rights for the few. In this process of remaking, other possibilities are increasingly constrained. Framed within an economic theory that prioritizes economic efficiency and market allocation, rationalization policies that limit and commodify fishing access rights are often presented as commonsense. This chapter illustrates the importance of critically exploring the language, values, and assumptions of rationalization. If we assume economic efficiency to be a natural and desirable condition, we view decreased fisheries participation and population in remote indigenous fishing villages as a just outcome. More efficient users have bought out less-efficient users; however, if we broaden our view of human–environment relations, we understand that restrictive-access policies tend to recreate certain social inequities. Lifestyle Alutiiq fishermen are disadvantaged compared to those fishermen with access to capital. Rather than unexpected consequences of rationalization, these inequities are predictable outcomes. It is difficult to situate stories like John’s in this discourse of efficiency and fishing solely for wealth generation. What is natural and desirable to many village fishermen like John is not running an efficient operation, nor making profits year after year; rather, it is securing the right to make a living off the resources of their home shores and maintaining a lifestyle, culture, and economy of dependence on the sea in a particular place.

Despite the discouraging trends discussed in this chapter, many Kodiak villagers see hope in collectively planning for future economic development based on commercial fishing. As part of the Kodiak Archipelago Rural Regional Leadership Forum, community leaders from each of the Kodiak villages have been meeting regularly for the past few years to discuss community planning and economic development. As marine resources have always formed the social and economic base of society in the Kodiak Archipelago, leaders are confident that healthy village futures must include healthy village fisheries. The persistence of the subsistence fishing economy demonstrates the importance of marine foods to sustenance and culture; however, as Reedy-Maschner (2008) notes, the link between commercial and subsistence fisheries is critical. Changes in commercial fisheries bring about changes in subsistence patterns.

Place-based models of community ownership and control of fishing rights may offer a promising solution to strengthen village fisheries that have been threatened by quota migration. McCay (2004) discusses trends in the North Pacific and Nova Scotia that point to a positive and empowering “reemergence of community” in policy discussions and actions involving privatized access fisheries. Christiansen and Vick (2007) argue that place-based ownership rights are necessary to sustain a village fishing way of life in coastal Gulf of Alaska communities. As Langdon discusses in this volume, the new Community Quota Entity program that enables community ownership of halibut and sablefish Anoplopoma fimbria quota shares has not yet been effective at redistributing quota shares; however, this program does provide a mechanism for the collective, community-based retention of fishing rights that could be strengthened in various ways (e.g., by the direct allocation of fishing rights or funding to

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12 In 2003, the per capita consumption of wild foods exceeded 300 lbs in each study community, 80–90% of which was marine-based (Fall 2006).
support community fisheries development. The sociocultural and economic characteristics of coastal village communities explored in this chapter suggest that successful community quota programs should be designed to enable community-based lifestyle fishing. Leasing quota share for revenue, while providing some economic and community benefits, will likely not address the problems that accompany lost access to meaningful fishing livelihoods. Envisioning and strengthening community-based fishing rights may help promote a diversity of fishing values and lifestyles that the discourses and realities of fisheries rationalization increasingly restrict.

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