

The Morality of Compliance in Coastal Fisheries

Cases from Norway and Newfoundland

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by

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ABSTRACT

A comparative study of compliance among Norwegian and Newfoundland inshore fishers revealed moral distinctions between food and money, moderation and excess. While violations of government regulations were generally accepted in food fisheries, they were met with moral unease or informal sanctions in commercial fisheries. These findings are discussed in relation to the moral meanings of money and food, and subsequently accounted for in the light of a theory of two moral spheres of economic activity in economies based on harvesting of natural resources for both household and the market.

Introduction

This paper is based on a comparative study of compliance in fishing communities in Norway and Newfoundland (Gezelius, 2003; Gezelius, in press). The data consists of interviews and observations made during the summer and autumn of 1997 and the spring of 1998 in a Norwegian and a Newfoundland fishing community. The fisheries of both communities faced strict regulations in this period, and there were significant incentives to break fisheries law.

Early research on compliance in the fisheries was largely oriented towards neoclassical economics and methodological individualism (Sutinen and Gauvin, 1989; Blewett et al., 1987; Furlong, 1991). More recent studies have also addressed normative action (Kuperan et al., 1997; Hønneland, 1998, 1999; Hatcher, 2000; Nielsen and Mathiesen, 2001). The main aim of this study has been to generate qualitative descriptions of the dynamics of compliance, as this is still scarce in the literature.

The paper will outline the dynamics of compliance in the two communities and subsequently compare and interpret them in the light of a more general theory on the economic morality of natural resource harvesters. Epistemologically, this paper can be said to have a “grounded theory” approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The Morality of Compliance in “Little Spruce Harbour” - Newfoundland

Background

The Newfoundland community, which I have given the fictional name “Little Spruce Harbour”, is a fishing community in eastern Newfoundland. It has approximately 350 inhabitants, constituting 130 households. Fishing and fish processing are the only significant industries in the community, and there are few employment opportunities besides these. The Little Spruce Harbour fishing fleet consists of nine 34 - 60 foot decked vessels and about 35 open boats. These are operated by fifteen crews, twelve of which live in the community. Little Spruce Harbour has 55 registered fishers.

Little Spruce Harbour is socially transparent. Gossip and rumours spread quickly and have great regulatory force. Also the different communities in the area are closely connected, and basically everybody knows everybody within a radius of several miles.

In 1992 the cod fisheries of eastern Newfoundland were closed, and two years later moratoria were introduced for just about all groundfish stocks in this area. Prior to these closures the economy of the Little Spruce Harbour fishing households was mainly based on cod and capelin fisheries, and a combination of unpaid work and fishermen's employment insurance in the mid winter months. The moratoria were still in effect at the time of my fieldwork, and had generated social crisis in great parts of rural Newfoundland (See FRCC, 1997, 1998; Steele et al., 1992; Williams, 1996).

Cod has been the backbone of the fisheries throughout Newfoundland's history. It has constituted a significant part of Newfoundland's economy and an essential part of its identity (Felt and Locke, 1995; Harris, 1990, pp. 19-21). The settlement in many of Newfoundland's rural communities still depends on these fisheries, and the moratorium thus led to rapid depopulation in several areas. In the minds of most Newfoundlanders, cod thus has a particular status as a common good. The morality of compliance in relation to the cod moratorium is, I believe, hard to understand unless keeping this in mind.

Like many other Newfoundland communities, Little Spruce Harbour was threatened by depopulation at the time of my fieldwork. However, this community had managed maintaining its fishing industry comparatively well due to its traditional dependency on pelagic fisheries in addition to cod. Besides, a great increase in snow crab prices and a special income support program introduced by the Canadian state in the wake of the groundfish moratoria ensured continued settlement and fishing activity in this community. Pot fisheries for crab and lobster, gillnet and seine fisheries for herring, and trap fisheries for capelin have been the main fisheries since 1994.

The cod moratorium also included food fisheries, and Canadian authorities enforced this ban strictly. Household poaching implied a genuine risk of being prosecuted and fined. Food fisheries have traditionally contributed significantly to the household economy of Little Spruce Harbour fishers, and are perceived as part of a Newfoundland culture and identity. Despite the poor condition of the stock, cod was abundant in the Little Spruce Harbour area, and the question of compliance was thus particularly relevant in relation to cod.

The Morality of Compliance

Most fishers believed that the collapse of the cod stock was caused by overfishing, and that the offshore fleet has played a major role in the depletion of the stock. Many fishers

perceived the big trawlers as manifestations of human greed. Greed was thus perceived by many as the deeper source of the fisheries crisis. People also blamed fisheries scientists and managers for having allowed this overfishing.

Little Spruce Harbour fishers, like most other people in this part of Newfoundland (see Ommer, 1998), believed that the government was right to close the cod fisheries. At the time of my fieldwork, most fishers thought that the condition of the stock had improved and that a limited test fishery thus should be allowed. However, it was almost unanimously agreed that the stock was vulnerable and that extreme caution, and thus strict management, was necessary.

At the time of my fieldwork a group of men from Little Spruce Harbour's surrounding area were arrested, charged with cod poaching. It was suspected that these activities had been going on for years on an organised, commercial basis. When the arrests were made, I had already heard intense rumours about these activities for some time. Little Spruce Harbour residents had quite detailed knowledge about these activities as well as who were involved, long before any arrests were made. Poaching for the purpose of sale was not accepted in Little Spruce Harbour, and these poachers were objects of strong and unambiguous moral blame. My informants told me that they avoided social contact with these people, as they did not want to become associated with the group. Some Little Spruce Harbour residents compared them with the mafia. There were rumours of threats, and my informants feared physical acts of vengeance if they blew the whistle. They complained that the poachers did not care about rumours and gossip, and people consequently requested more formal enforcement. The commercial poaching ring thus emerged as a criminal sub-group, excluded from the larger collectivity of fishers. The high level of social exclusion put the normal mechanisms of social control out of force, such that the relationship between the poaching ring and the larger collectivity was largely regulated by mutual deterrence.

Protecting the cod stock was regarded a collective responsibility, and a perceived moral obligation to take one's share of the protection of a common good was strongly reflected in Little Spruce Harbour's fishers' morality of compliance. This morality emerged as collectively negotiated, as none of my 30 informants diverged from the common view on this issue. Commercial poaching was seen as parasitic on the collective sacrifice that was made in order to rebuild the stock. The norm against commercial poaching was rooted in a general norm against free riding, and it was argued that commercial poaching delayed the stock's

rehabilitation. My informants also held that these poachers received government income support money and thus had what they needed.

People's support for the cod moratorium did not include food fisheries. There was a negotiated consensus that food fisheries should be allowed, as it could not pose a threat to the stock. In contrast to commercial poaching, poaching small amounts of cod for food was not met with informal sanctions. When people condemned commercial poachers, they generally contrasted them with household poachers. The latter group was met with sympathy and understanding. People based their differing moral evaluations of the two groups on a distinction between money and food, and between large-scale and small-scale fishery. Scale and commerce were seen as naturally connected. While Little Spruce Harbour residents requested more enforcement in terms of commercial poaching, they reacted with indignation and fury when household poachers were arrested and fined. In contrast to commercial poaching, household poaching could thus take place fairly openly. For instance during squid fishing, where many boats are tied together on the fishing ground, small amounts of cod could be poached for food and exchanged as gift between the boats. The moral distinction between commercial poaching and subsistence poaching thus formed part of their collective identity and contributed to the integration of the group. Exchanging a poached codfish in front of other community members symbolises trust and knowledge and acceptance of a common moral distinction. Enforcement personnel confirmed that the moral distinction between commercial poaching and subsistence poaching was widespread in Newfoundland, and I also found the same distinction in relation to game poaching.

The morality of compliance in this community was based on the obligation to obey rules established to protect the common good, and on a perceived right to catch what you need for own use. A conspicuous feature of this data was that no one seemed to experience any potential conflict between these norms. Informants emphasised that food fishery, in contrast to commercial fishery, did no harm to the stock. A moral distinction between food and money was connected to a distinction between greed and moderate demands, and thus to ideas of solidarity and conservation of a scarce common good.

The Morality of Compliance in "Uerhavn" - Norway

Background

The Norwegian community, which I have given the fictional name "Uerhavn", is a fishing community in north-western Norway. It has 390 inhabitants, constituting 150 households. Uerhavn has 60 registered fishermen, whereof 36 fish full-time. Uerhavn's fishing fleet consists of 17 decked vessels, 11 of which can be classified as "professionally active". Three of these are over 40 feet, and operates with a combination of purse seines and gillnets. They have crews of three to seven people. The smaller vessels are one or two-man operations, fishing with automatic jigging machines and gillnets.

Albeit Uerhavn's fishing vessels go north to participate in the Lofoten cod fishery in the winter, the vessels under 40 feet depend on the domestic saithe fishery for most of the year. The purse seiners are somewhat more adaptable, as they participate in both groundfish and pelagic fisheries.

Uerhavn is a fishing community in decline. The number of fishermen is reduced with approximately 40 % since the mid 1980s, and the total population of the community has dropped by about 20 % in the same period. Uerhavn's residents were concerned and worried about the future of this fishing community, and this concern was relevant to their attitude towards compliance with fisheries regulations

Despite its gradual decline, the fishing industry is still by far the most important source of employment in Uerhavn. In addition to the fishing fleet, a local fish processing plant employs approximately 30 people.

State subsidies to the Norwegian fishing fleet were largely abolished in the 1990s (see Hegrenes et al 2002), and Uerhavn's fishermen generally received no income support from the state. The income stability of the households was improved by women's work outside the fisheries sector. Food fishery also provided a small supplement to the monetary incomes.

Like its Newfoundland counterpart, Uerhavn is a small, intimate and socially transparent community. Rumours spread easily and there are few alternative collectivities to join for someone socially excluded. Your reputation as a fisherman affects your general standing in the community, and there are no clear distinctions between colleagues, neighbours, family and friends. There is thus a high level of social control.

The Morality of Compliance

Several Uerhavn vessels were severely affected by government regulations at the time of my fieldwork, and the question of compliance was frequently discussed among the fishermen. Secrecy was generally hard to achieve, and a fisherman would usually avoid violating fisheries regulations if he risked being condemned among colleagues. The pattern of compliance and non-compliance thus largely followed a pattern defined by collectively negotiated moral norms.

A strict total allowable catch for saithe led to an early closure of this fishery for large parts of Uerhavn's fleet at the time of my fieldwork. A small by-catch percentage was allowed when fishing for other species, but it was practically impossible to fish for groundfish in these waters without greatly exceeding that limit. In effect, closing the saithe fishery meant closing down Uerhavn's groundfish fisheries. Most Uerhavn vessels had managed to secure a reasonably good season when the fishery closed, and the larger vessels also had the opportunity to fish for pelagic species. The boats thus ceased fishing saithe and went into pelagic fisheries or stayed by the wharf. It was also clear that they were morally expected to do so. However, a few of Uerhavn's vessels were particularly severely affected as they had had poor seasons and lacked acceptable alternative fishing possibilities. A couple of these boats continued fishing for saithe. The other fishermen recognised that this implied getting illegal amounts of by-catch, and the general understanding was that these boats concealed this fact through falsification of purchase slips. Falsification of purchase slips is illegal, prosecuted by the court system, and is one of the most commonly reported violations of Norwegian fisheries law. The most striking aspect of the data was that these fishermen did not become objects of significant moral blame among their law-abiding colleagues. They were met with a great degree of understanding and were largely excused, although their behaviour was far from considered unproblematic. Their behaviour generated moral unease, doubt and some conflict in the community, and this moral ambiguity left the collectivity incapable of generating efficient sanctions. This moral ambiguity was rooted in the conflict between two moral norms, both of which were generally accepted as relevant and valid in this situation. First, there was the perceived moral obligation to obey the law. Becoming a "lawbreaker" was associated with significant moral discomfort, and law-abidingness formed part of Uerhavn residents' image of the good citizen. Secondly, there was the perceived right to make a reasonable living from fishing. It was generally agreed that the only way for these particular vessels to manage economically was to continue fishing by falsifying purchase slips. People

were also very aware that the viability of the fishing community as such depended on the economic survival of the boats. The moral "grey zone" which emerged in the conflict between these two moral norms, created moral elbowroom for some degree of illegal adaptation by vessels experiencing financial hardships.

Breaking the law in order to maximise profit in situations that could not be classified as *force majeure* was clearly not accepted. There was for example one incident where a fisherman had started selling his catch at the black market instead of going through the sales organisations as is required by law. According to the fisherman himself, he did this on a "large scale". Selling catch at the black market may generate significant extra profit, but implies violating catch report regulations, first hand trade regulations, tax laws and possibly other regulations as well. Information about his activities eventually got out in the community, and generated some significant gossip. The fisherman consequently quit his illegal practice immediately fearing that his reputation was about to be destroyed. He later recalled this as a highly unpleasant experience.

The distinction between moderation and excess formed an important part of Uerhavn fishermen's moral judgement in terms of compliance. A fisherman could be largely excused when breaking a rule on a small scale in order to ensure a necessary income. However, if he was perceived as breaking rules "on a large scale" in order to maximise personal profit, he became an object of back-biting, social degradation and potential exclusion.

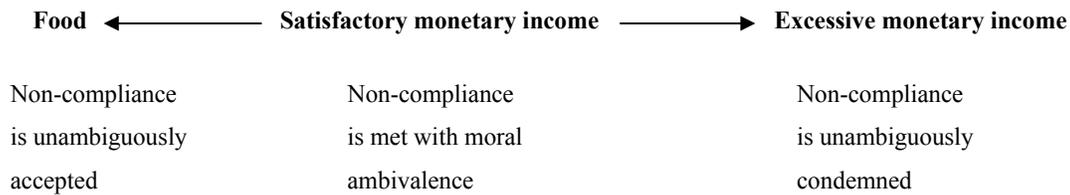
Violations of the law were never seen as entirely unproblematic in commercial fisheries, even when generated by economic hardships and perceived necessity. However, food fisheries were apparently not subjected to the same degree of moral vigilance. Drift net fishing for salmon has been illegal in Norway since 1989. When the ban was introduced, it had been a controversial issue for a number of years (Knudsen, 1979; Norway, 1987, 1989; Norwegian Fishermen's Association, 1990). A couple of Uerhavn's vessels had also depended on this fishery and resisted the ban. These crews were still professionally active in other fisheries at the time of my fieldwork. Illegal salmon fisheries for the purpose of sale are not accepted among Uerhavn's fishermen, but salmon poaching for the purpose of food is quite another matter. In contrast to violations in commercial fisheries, illegal food fishery is not experienced as controversial, and is not met with discussions or gossip. Several Uerhavn fishermen occasionally poach salmon for food, and these activities are not connected with extensive secrecy.

The morality of compliance among Uerhavn's fishermen was in many ways similar to their Newfoundland counterparts. The moral obligation to comply with state regulations only pertained to commercial fisheries, and the moral distinction between moderate and excessive demands was central. While money tended to trigger off a certain moral vigilance, food was perceived as morally innocent. In the following we will attempt to explore and account for these patterns of morality a little closer.

Summary of Empirical Findings

The patterns of compliance in the two communities are connected with the moral meanings of moderation, excess, food and money. The morality of compliance can be viewed as a line stretching from food to excessive monetary income, as outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Morality of Compliance



The fishers in Uerhavn and Little Spruce Harbour regard food as morally innocent. Activities aimed to supply food are consequently not subjected to the collectivity's moral vigilance. Activities oriented towards personal food supply are seen as having little potential of threatening the common good, and state regulation is consequently experienced as misplaced. The community's moral vigilance increases as resource harvesting activities are carried out for commercial purposes. This does naturally not imply that commerce is seen as immanently immoral, but rather that it is experienced as morally perilous. Regulation by the state is thus seen as morally relevant, and often also as necessary.

Moral Meanings of Food and Money

This morality may be connected with the more general moral meanings of money and food. The bodily need for food can be regarded as naturally limited. When the resource

harvester is satisfied and safe in terms of food supply, it is not rational to continue increasing the scale of subsistence-oriented resource harvesting. A subsistence economy may thus be experienced as putting a natural limit to the scale of resource harvesting activities. Fishing for the purpose of food is thus seen as naturally moderate, and thus as compatible with the conservation of a scarce common good. Little Spruce Harbour residents consequently did not see illegal food fishery as a threat to the stock.

The nature of money differs from food in this respect. The exchange possibilities accompanying money enable the actor to pursue an almost unlimited range of goals. Consequently, money sets no natural limit as to when further extraction of common pool resources ceases to be rational. Commercial fishing, in contrast to subsistence harvesting, may thus be associated with the logic of the herdsmen in Garret Hardin's commons (Hardin 1968). This means that commercial resource harvesting may be perceived as implying a potential threat to the common good. It is consequently subjected to moral norms requiring that regulations concerning the extraction of common pool resources be complied with.

The connection between money and scale may not only be morally relevant due to its potential consequences for the conservation of common pool resources. It may also affect people's perception of the resource harvester's motives. The fact that commerce puts no natural limit to the rational scale of resource extraction, means that money may be perceived as a potential medium through which greed can unfold as economic action. Greed is not only associated with potential harm to the common good, but has also been viewed historically as a reprehensible motive in its own right. The idea that desire for material wealth corrupts the human soul pervades western moral and religious thinking. It can be found in the works of Plato, which inspired Augustin and thus also influenced the Christian Church (Doyle, 1999; Plato, 1985, Book VIII, pp. 549-551). The Bible quite consistently holds that greed is a sin and worshipping of false gods. Moderation is seen as a moral virtue (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5; Isa. 56:11; Luke 12:15; Prov. 1:19; Prov. 15:27; Rotter, 1979, p. 184).

The idea that money and trade are associated with greed is equally as old. Aristotle saw money as connected with unlimited desire, while idealising subsistence production. This view influenced the Church through Thomas Aquinas, and can also be found in several famous passages in the Bible (Aristotle, 1981; Bloch and Parry, 1989; Parry, 1989; I Timothy 6:8-10; Luke 16: 13). The connection between money and greed is quite striking in the word "mammon", which is commonly used as a synonym for money, while it originally refers to the devil of covetousness or the false god of greed (Harris, 1989, pp. 237-238; Tawney,

1936). Trade was viewed as perilous to the soul in medieval religious theory, and later on also by Martin Luther. However, it is well known that certain Christian movements developed widespread acceptance of trade and profit-making in the early days of capitalism, and no one would dispute that trade is a morally legitimate enterprise today (Tawney, 1936; Weber, 1930). It is also clear that none of the informants in this study holds the view that commerce is immanently immoral. What I will argue, is that the legacy of moral thinking described above has left certain ideological traces, which also can be found in modern largely-secularised societies. Today, these traces are manifest as a certain moral vigilance associated with money. Commercial activities are not as such seen as immoral, but they are none the less experienced as more easily infected by immorality than subsistence production is. Bloch and Parry (1989, p. 18) has put this in a short and apt wording, stating that earning money has become more and more marginal to, but never quite detached from, the Devil's domain. In order to understand the moral distinction between food and money observed in our two communities, it might thus be useful to keep this legacy of moral ideology in mind. The tenacity of this ideological heritage may no doubt be rooted in secular factors, such as the logic of resource use addressed above, or the nature of exchange, which we are going to address next.

Exchange of specific goods, such as food, requires complementary needs. It is therefore most suited in settings where goods can be transformed into long-term obligation or love and respect, as has been described by Faris' (1972). Such exchange consequently requires trust and durable social ties. Subsistence production is hence generally associated with close relations, such as friendship, kin and community. It may therefore be associated with strict social control and a wide range of moral responsibilities.

Money allows exchanges to be settled immediately, and thus only requires a temporary relationship and a modest level of trust. Money consequently allows exchange with strangers, and thus the looser networks of the market. This may be experienced as reducing the level of social control and range of moral responsibilities involved in the transactions. It can also be argued that money has become a symbol of strangeness. There is an emotional resistance against using money as a medium of exchange among friends for instance. If I do a friend a favour and she offers me money in return, it is equal to telling me I am not her friend. It can also be argued that strangeness as such is associated with moral danger. Several authors concerned with the social psychology of group formation have argued and presented empirical evidence to the effect that people tend to regard members of their own group as

being "better people" than members of "outgroups", in Sumners (1940) terms (Hogg and Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel, 1982, pp. 20-21; Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Turner, 1975, pp. 7-8). People's distrust in strangers may thus not only be rooted in the fact that they know little about them. It is also connected to basic psychological processes of identity formation and conceptions of "us" and "them".

If money is a symbol of strangeness and strangeness is associated with moral peril, money may thus have become symbolically contaminated by the moral meaning of stranger relationships. Money may thus be experienced as representing moral danger, and thus as infested with latent impurity. Hence, the collectivity becomes morally vigilant when members involve in commercial activities.

The latent moral impurity of money only becomes manifest in relation to acts that are somehow morally ambiguous or immoral at the outset. If someone breaks a common rule, he becomes an object of particularly strong abhorrence if his motive is money. By contrast, if he breaks the same rule for the purpose of food, he might very well be excused. Food has a perceived flavour of moral innocence, as it is associated with a fundamental bodily need. It can be argued that it is exactly this dynamic of morality we have seen in relation to poaching in our two communities.

We have thereby suggested that the morality of compliance observed among Newfoundland and Norwegian fishers form part of a much more widespread moral pattern, and may thus provide the basis of hypotheses of a certain generality. In the following, we will attempt to account for our empirical findings somewhat more systematically by suggesting the existence of two moral spheres of economic activity in economies based on harvesting of natural resources for both household and the market.

One of these spheres is perceived as morally safe ground. Activities perceived as belonging here are thus generally met with a moral "green light", indicating "no danger" or "go ahead". It will thus be referred to as the "green sphere" of economic activity. This sphere is linked to subsistence harvesting, small-scale operations and the provision of necessities. The other sphere is perceived as morally dangerous. This does not imply that activities perceived as belonging here are seen as immoral. However, there is a danger of immorality, and this requires moral caution. This sphere will thus be referred to as the yellow sphere of economic activity. The yellow sphere is connected with commerce, large-scale operations and search for maximum profit. The two spheres constitute a system for the moral classification of acts. This system is outlined in Table 1.

In the two communities studied, the yellow sphere emerges as the domain of legitimate governance by the state. All instances where state regulations were informally enforced could be classified as belonging to the yellow sphere. It appears that state regulation was largely perceived as misplaced in the green sphere, and regulations concerning green sphere activities were not accompanied by informal enforcement mechanisms.

Table 1. The Moral Spheres of Economic Activity

| | Green sphere of economic activity | Yellow sphere of economic activity |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Type of economy | Subsistence production. | Market-oriented. Trade. |
| Means of goal achievement | Food and shelter. | Money. |
| Form of exchange | Does not involve strangers. Efficient social control. | Potentially involves strangers. Loss of social control. |
| Attitude of agent | Naturally connected with temperance. Focus on basic needs only. | Allows focus on infinite wants. Greed. |
| Goal | Limited to the achievement of a satisfactory life. | Maximum profit. |
| Scale of economic activity | Small-scale. | Large-scale |
| Moral meaning | Individual right. Compatible with solidarity and moral virtue. No threat to common good. | Satisfaction of personal desires potentially threatens the common good. Potential for idolatry/spiritual corruption. |
| Basic moral classification | Morally safe. | Morally dangerous. |
| External regulation | Inappropriate. | Appropriate. |

In the Norwegian community, we saw that regulations were sometimes violated in commercial fisheries without triggering informal sanctions. I believe the outline of the two moral spheres can account for this. The absence of negative sanctions was rooted in the perception that these violations were necessary to secure the economic survival of these particular boats. On the one hand, these violations were committed in order to ensure a monetary outcome, which is a hallmark of the yellow sphere. On the other hand, they only aimed to ensure a moderate and necessary outcome, which is a hallmark of the green sphere. Moreover, these violations were committed by inshore vessels, smaller than 40 feet. The

Norwegian inshore fishing fleet is accompanied by a large offshore fleet, and commercial inshore fisheries thus emerge as being of a comparatively small scale, and consequently as only a moderate case of yellow sphere activity. The unsanctioned violations observed in Uerhavn thus contained elements of both spheres, and were consequently experienced as hard to classify morally. Therefore, these illegal incidents triggered moral doubt and uneasiness rather than unambiguous condemnation. The community was consequently left incapable of efficient sanctioning.

It is implicit in the analysis above that classification according to the two moral spheres may not be made in a strictly dichotomous manner. It can often emerge as placement along a continuum where activities are perceived as more or less yellow or green according to the number and type of criteria they fulfil and the extent to which they fulfil them. We may thus hypothesise that the collectivity's moral vigilance increases as the economic activity gets more yellow.

The morality of poaching observed in the Newfoundland case illustrates the differences in moral meaning between activities clearly classified as green and clearly classified as yellow. The household poacher is perceived as pursuing a moderate outcome without threatening the common good. Small-scale food fishery emerges as an ultimate case of green sphere activity, and the household poacher is regarded with understanding and even sympathy. By contrast, the scale associated with commercial poaching was perceived as threatening a fish stock of vital importance to the collectivity, and as undermining of a collective sacrifice to protect it. Commercial poachers were considered greedy, and seen as representing the attitudes underlying the fisheries crisis of Newfoundland. This fish stock had also traditionally been important both in terms of subsistence and the monetary economy, which made the distinction between the two economies meaningful and conspicuous. Commercial cod poaching in Newfoundland was thus associated with many dimensions of the yellow sphere. The involvement of money triggered off a moral chain reaction leading to extreme reprehension.

The hypothesis of the two moral spheres applies to economies which include both production for the market as well as for subsistence. It is reasonable to assume that the distinction between the two spheres is most relevant in economies where green sphere activities are carried out for subsistence rather than mere recreation, and where these activities can be meaningfully related to yellow sphere counterparts. In such cases the distinction between food and money is related to both the motive and the material outcome of the

economic activity, and they will both be perceived as relevant in relation to the household economy.

The communities addressed here form part of western, traditionally Christian societies, and I have thus focused on their history of ideas. This is not meant to suggest that largely similar moral distinctions cannot be found in societies with different historical and religious roots. On the contrary, it is reasonable to hypothesise that they can. However, properly addressing the extent to which the interpretations of our two communities can be transferred to various other cultural settings will have to be left to future research.

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