

Dr. Bonnie J. McCay
Professor, Rutgers University
Dept. of Human Ecology
Cook Office Building, 55 Dudley Rd.
New Brunswick, NJ 08901 USA

Fax: (732) 932-6667

Email: mccay@aesop.rutgers.edu

Discussant's Comments, Fisheries Stream [Transcribed from videotape of session.]

First of all, I do want to apologize, I'm an academic, and like most academics I'm somewhat confused about what I am. [Places cartoon on overhead viewer.] If you can't read the bottom of this little cartoon, it shows a gentleman in a busy city asking an officer for help. He says, "Excuse me officer, I'm an academic. Where am I?"

Anyway, one of the beauties of this association is that we academics get to learn more about where we are by interacting with practitioners, and officials of agencies, and so forth. The Fisheries stream certainly provided that kind of opportunity throughout. I'm going to first just put up here a list of the sessions [places list on overhead], and you can see how many there were, and how diverse they were, and how wonderful it was that I could actually sit through all of these sessions and really continue to enjoy it. In fact, one of the reasons we're late is that the last one I was sitting in just wouldn't end, it kept going and going, there was just so much to talk about.

We covered quite a bit of ground in these sessions, and because it's sectorally based, we certainly didn't have any coherent theory emerging from it - I've lost my notes - oh well, pick it up - but you can see some of the themes emerging from this include: the importance of knowledge, so called "traditional knowledge", or the knowledge that comes out of experiences of practitioners, of fishers and others, and the interaction of that knowledge with the knowledge that's generated through the scientific process and the political process. That's one of the very very important and powerful themes.

Another theme that appears throughout this is the "commons", and the attempt to develop new institutions, or build on old institutions, for the commons. The major buzzword in this regard is "co-management", so most papers talked about, had something to say about co-management. But co-management is a process, it's a way of doing things; it's not necessarily the way you manage. It's the organization of it, it's a governance mode. And so we also talked about other modes of governance, such as "privatizing"; letting the market make some of the decisions about management. That was the theme of "Privatizing the Marine Commons" (sic), and it certainly is in the background for an awful lot of what is going on in fisheries in the world today.

Territories; establishment of the existence of territories, and the implications of territories for abilities to successfully manage fishery resources always is another theme that appears

throughout. It was a feature of one session, and it certainly is clear in the topic "The Problem of Transboundary Management of Fisheries" (sic).

Another theme throughout this stream is that of "who's views are being expressed?", and the rising importance of stakeholders other than resource users. I think we can see that in all our streams, but, in particular, we had a session that was organized around the conservation voice in US fisheries management, and the ways that the conservation NGO community have (sic) organized themselves to be more effective. The discussion around that raised some rather hot questions about the implications of that for other users of the resource.

Now, co-management, as I said, really did emerge as a major theme. I think we have to understand that in context, it's associated with major changes throughout the world. [Places cartoon on overhead.] This is a gentleman, of military standing, a dictator, who said, "My goodness, if I'd known how bad you wanted democracy, I would have given it to you ages ago!" [Dictator is faced with an endless crowd of people, guns and tanks.] But we certainly have opportunities, there are new spaces that have been opened up, for one reason or the other, including the democratization of many countries; opportunities to develop new forms of management that get people much more meaningfully involved. And so the challenge is being addressed to some extent, being met. In the papers that I went through, I certainly learned a lot about that. One thing that struck me is that whether we're talking about Bangladesh, or we're talking about the islands of the Eastern Caribbean, or we're talking about the Philippines, or we're talking about the State of Maine in the United States, or for parts of Canada, we're really very much talking about the same kinds of problems in co-management, in local community-based management and the intersection with other forces. So that was one of the things I got out of this. I just (was) saying to somebody from Bangladesh (to whom I) was talking, "Yeah, yeah, that's the way it is in New Jersey!", so there are generalizations that are significant here.

But context is also very important. What we do is imbedded. I'm just going to leave you with a statement about context that refers to the importance of context to incentives; and in this case refers to the importance of context and security, a sense of security about the future, and maybe refers to ecological change, and how that influences our willingness to be stewards of resources and to follow the rules. So I'll put up here something from Gary Larson, that some of you may be familiar with. [Places cartoon on overhead.] These 2 men are out fishing, and they look and they see a mushroom cloud from a nuclear explosion:

"I'll tell you what this means Norm -- no size restrictions and screw the limit."

Thank you.